# GOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

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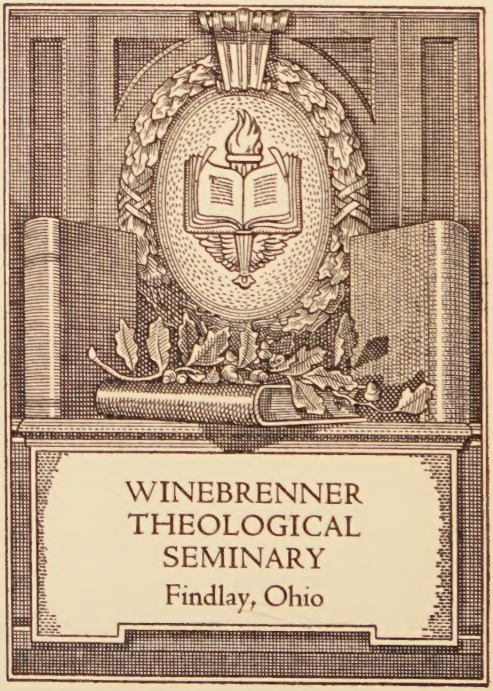


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# GOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE

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JOSEPH FORT NEWTON
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To

JENNIE MAI AND JOSEPHINE KATE

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

I DEDICATE A BOOK OF LOVE

WITH GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

## IN THE VESTRY

Three of the sermons in this book served as articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and three in the *Christian Century;* the rest were born of a busy ministry in the midst of human need and yearning—all seeking to lead and lift men and women into a higher air of faith for to-day and of clearer hope for the morrow. They have many titles but only one theme, the Life of God in the soul, trying so to strike all the senses of the soul that, from apathy or doubt or weariness, it may be awakened to know God and live in Him, whose law is the one way to go and whose will is our peace.

The human heart remains the same in its needs, its aspirations, its wistful longings; and its broodings on life and the dim hereafter never fade or die. To-day, as in all the past, to any fresh or earnest word on these intimate and mysterious questionings men listen with an eagerness which fancy ascribes to the Ages of Faith. It is a prayer in the heart of the preacher that those who read his words may find a truth they need, a love they long to know, and catch a glimpse, if nothing more, of "the one beauty we were sent to seek."

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

Memorial Church of St. Paul.
Overbrook, Philadelphia.

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# GOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE

# GOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE

## YES

The divine Yes has at last sounded in Him, for in Him is the Yes that affirms all the promises of God.

*II Corinthians* 1: 19-20.

HERE is one of the noblest of all texts, hidden and well-nigh lost in the older version, but rescued and renewed in the Moffat reading of it. A flash of profound insight, it was called forth almost accidentally by a tone of complaint in a letter. St. Paul had promised to visit his friends in Corinth, but found later that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for him to do so. They chided him because he seemed to say Yes and then No, showing himself to be fickle. He admitted that his plan had gone awry, but—seizing the suggestion—he said that the gospel he had taught them was not a thing of Yes and No, but a grand affirmation—and the Amen of God to all the deepest aspirations of man.

For some of us this text recalls an unforgettable page from the tender, whimsical fancy of Wendell Holmes, as he mused *Over the Tea-Cups*. It is a mellow

book, wise, witty, lovable, serious yet playful, in which a noble man, grown old, distilled the ripe wisdom and brave faith of his life. He was faring toward sunset when he wrote, and he knew that the end was not far away, but his heart was tender and full of hope. One of the talkers over the tea-cups expressed the wish to boss this world for a week; and failing that, he agreed to write the history of the world in less compass than any one had ever tried to write it before. Of course, the company were properly astonished at such audacity.

"You have read Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World,* of course?" said the Professor.

"More or less—more or less," said Number Seven, prudently. "But I don't care who has written it before me. I will agree to write the history of two worlds, this and the next, in such a compact way that you can commit them both to memory in less time than you can learn the first question in the catechism."

Naturally, the company were speechless with amazement, while Number Seven took a blank card from his pocket and wrote something on it, or appeared, at any rate, to write, and handed it, face down, to the landlady. When the card had been handed round the room for all to read, this was what they saw: a question-mark, a thin wavy line above it, and above that an exclamtion-point. After all had looked at it, it was passed to the Dictator, who interpreted it after this manner:

"Two worlds, the higher and the lower, separated by the thinnest of partitions. The lower world is that of questions; the upper world is that of answers. End-

less doubt and unrest here below; wondering adoring certainty above. Am I not right?"

"You are right," said Number Seven. "That is my revelation."

But, it will be said, that is the same old circle, the same old postponement. Even so, but with a very important difference: it is an attitude of faith and expectancy, and such faith is wisdom. At first the difference seems to be very slight, a mere matter of inner attitude; but that is what faith really is—a bias in behalf of a sane universe in which there are answers to sensible questions, as over against a world that has neither rime nor reason in it. In other words, it is the difference between a negative and a positive life. For most of us, alas, what we call faith is a balancing of probabilities, a debate between two voices, one affirming and the other denying. St. Paul insists that the religion of Jesus not only tips the balance in favor of faith, but takes its stand decisively and finally on the side of sanity, serenity, and victory, of which his own life was both a proof and a prophecy. If we can win this faith and employ its strategy, we have found the secret most worth finding.

It is indeed true that we live in a world of questions. If we were asked to design a symbol for our human banners, we might with reason select the interrogation-point. Questions besiege us on every hand. They leap out from the dark corners of life; they meet us at every turn of the road; they rise up from the open grave. They come early and stay late. Every life is full of unanswered questions that lacerate the heart and baffle

the mind. Time, itself a riddle, solves many riddles, but the darkest questions follow us to the end and set sail with us on our long journey. Did Burke ever forget his boy, or cease to wonder why that bright face paled so early? Never; he carried that question in his heart when he went away, and found the answer, if at all, elsewhere. The why of a child may be dismissed with a partial reply, but the why of manhood will not down at our bidding.

No doubt it is better so, since, if all riddles were solved, life would lose much of its zest and tang of adventure, as well as its dreary, dull ache of waiting for those who return no more. As James put it picturesquely: "Smiles and the word Yes prove too tepid and relaxed a moral climate. Some austerity and wintry negativity, some roughness, danger, stringency, and effort, some No! No! must be mixed in to produce the sense of character, texture, and power." The Cup of Questioning may be bitter betimes, as God wots, denying peace to us, challenging alike our faith and fortitude, as Meredith taught us so searchingly in *Beauchamp's Career;* but it does project us on in quest of the Why, the Wherefore, and the How. Writing to Herbert Spencer years ago, Andrew Carnegie said: "You come to me every day in thought, and the everlasting Why intrudes." Spencer replied: "The Why? and the Why? and the Why? are questions which press more and more as the years go by." He wrote in September, and in December he died at the age of eighty-three, with that Why still in his heart.

But surely we have a right to ask a question in respect of our questions, and that is: Why do men ask questions at all? It must be that God is the great Questioner; else where did the questioning instinct come from? Why are the real values—truth, beauty, goodness, love—not to be "proved" like a sum, if they do not require constant exploring? Why pine for the interrogation-point to give way to a full stop, if by seeking answers we may, if we prove worthy, find the Answerer? Would not heaven be an eternal boredom with no more questions to ask? Plato reasoned well when he said that it is the pressure of the answer that puts the question, showing us that truth is near-by, and prodding our mind to discover it. Every question, as he went on to say, contains a hint of its answer, if we have the wit to find it. At least, it is the beginning of wisdom, as well as of peace of heart, when we lay aside the conceit that we are able to ask any question which the universe cannot answer. We may not be ready or able to receive the answer, but that does not so much matter if once we know whose Voice it is that prompts the asking. Whereby, also, we have a token that our blindness and slow-hearted folly does not mean that there is no answer.

Carlyle has told us in *Sartor Resartus*—with his "wind-in-the-orchard style," as Meredith called it—how he came to a time of life when to his most eager questions the universe seemed to say No. It was a bitter ordeal. Doubt darkened into disbelief; shade after shade grew grimly over his soul, and he walked in a

fixed, starless, Tartarean night. Instead of falling into despair, his pain begat defiance, and his soul stood up and made protest. From the everlasting No he passed to a "center of indifference," in which so many men live to-day in respect to ultimate isues—many more than we realize, who are not hostile, but simple indifferent. It was a dismal period, as Carlyle admits. Life lost its luster. The earth seemed a dog-cage, the grave a hound's ditch. Slowly, by ways no words can trace, he found his way to a better mood, a cleaner insight, and the universe which had been so unresponsive answered with an everlasting Yes! He was in a new world, no longer dead nor demoniacal, but divine, and the earth was a dewy valley with a lark-song over it. His heart overflowed with a tide of love and pity, breaking forth in that memorable passage:

> Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried, and beaten with many stripes, even as I am? Ever, whether thou bear a royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy laden; and thy bed of rest is but a grave. O my brother, my brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes! Truly, the din of many-voiced life, which, in this solitude, I could hear, was no longer a maddening discord, but a melting one; like inarticulate cries and sobbings of a dumb creature, which in the ear of heaven are prayers. . . . Man, with his so mad wants and so mean endeavors, had become dearer to me; and even for his sufferings and his sins I now first name him Brother.

Thus, by strange, steep ways he came to the porch of the sanctuary of sorrows, and ere long he found "the

divine depth of sorrow" disclosed in himself. What Carlyle discovered with such difficulty, and after long wanderings in the dark, St. Paul learned more vividly, more victoriously, by following Christ, in whom he heard the everlasting Yes. It is a great passage: "The divine Yes has at last sounded in him, for in him is the Yes that affirms all the promises of God. Hence it is through him that we affirm our Amen in worship, to the glory of God. And it is God who confirms me along with you in Christ, who consecrated me, who stamped me with his seal, and gave me the Spirit as a pledge in my heart." Yes and Amen, the affirmation of God and the mighty answer to the human heart; the promise and the token of its fulfilment—a life heroic and lovely, faithful to the end, giving us a pledge that our divine dreams are not delusions, and that the faiths that make us men are not frail wisps of fancy woven of airy nothings.

Satan, said Goethe, is the spirit that denies, the cynic, the pessimist, the skeptic, in whose presence prayer dies on our lips. Every man of us must have felt the blighting touch of that spirit. It mocks our highest faiths; it belittles our loftiest moods; it sneers at our ideals and tries to make us ashamed of our fairest hopes. At its touch the finest ideals fade into unreality. Even in its noblest form it robs us of what is most worth keeping, and leaves us to fight a forlorn battle against overwhelming odds; as if man were an exotic in an alien universe, to be crushed at last, with all that he loves, by the ruthless march of matter. Over against

this horror stands the spirit of Christ, in whose presence our drab days are touched with glory, and our highest hopes grow golden with prophecy. He is the spirit that affirms; his gospel is the gospel of the Yes —he denies only our denials. Each of us must choose between these two, whether he will live in a dim world of denial, or dare to affirm the highest and give himself to it. There is no need to say that the worth of our lives to ourselves, as well as to others, will depend largely upon how we cast our lot in this high matter.

Vanity and vexation of spirit are not all that we find. Often our faith is sorely tried, and thoughtful men have been driven to call life an enigma, but few have been willing to curse it as a folly or a fraud. No, it has too much meaning and shows too much purpose for that, though its secret and goal are not yet clear. St. Paul was wise in that he dared to interpret the meaning and value of life prophetically, by what is highest in it, not by what is lowest. He refused to admit that the cynical, the selfish, or the cowardly had read the riddle aright, and that the faithful, the loving, the heroic and true-hearted have read it amiss. Even in the folly which is our only wisdom we dare not think such a thing; that way madness lies. St. Paul deemed it bravest to trust the best, and so he followed Christ, in whom he saw the fulfilment of all the promises of God. No doubt the promises he had in mind were those written in the law and the prophets of Israel; but they were first written in the very nature of the human heart, in its dumb instincts, its dim intuitions, its craving for

the ideal, its hunger for love, its undeveloped capacities, and its growing demand upon the universe. As another version has it, "However many the promises of God are, in Him is the Yes," affirming and confirming all.

Three things we want to know above all others. First, as the wounded officer asked the chaplain in the hospital: "What I want to know, padre, is: What is God like?" What is the nature, the purpose, the motive of the vast Power in which we live embosomed, upon whom we every moment depend, and in whose great hand we are held? Is he indeed the Father and the friend of the soul? Second, he who ever gives a thought to the life of man at large, to his miseries and disappointments, to the waste and cruelty of existence, will ask the meaning of it all. Is it worth while, and is there a thread of all-sustaining purpose running through it? And, third, is death the end of all? Is there a hideous slip, a swift and fearful fall into an abyss, in which all values of love, of character, of moral achievement are erased in a blur of dust? Or is death a beginning, an awakening, a dawn, the opening of a gate into life abundant? Once these questions are answered triumphantly, the rest is only a matter of detail, of adjustment and interpretation. We can bear all things, if we are assured that there is love at the heart of life.

Is God the Father of the soul? Is life really worth while? Is the grave a gate into freer and more abundant life where lost things are found. St. Paul found in Christ the answer to these questions, and it was an

everlasting Yes! Indeed, he found—as, later, Browning learned—that the fact of Christ accepted by the reason, by the heart, answers "all questions in the world and out of it." What is the token? It is the fact of Christ; the fact that out of the darkness of the universe, out of the tragedy of humanity, out of the waste and welter and woe of life, such a figure arose, such a face shone, such a voice spoke, such a life was lived and still lives. There are many beautiful things in the world. There are sunsets that are sacraments, songs that set us dreaming, flowers that touch us with a wild, sad joy, and faces that are gospel books. But the one ineffable beauty of the world, the sublimest possession of humanity, is the vision of God in Christ! Once we see it, nothing is too good to be true, no ideal is too high, no hope too radiant! Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to dream a dream too fair to be fulfilled. No wonder St. Paul lived victoriously; no wonder all his great arguments end in anthems.

Overhanging the brook of Kedron, like a nest of a swallow on the side of a gorge, is the old monastery of Marsaba. Partly cut out of the rock, partly clinging to it, it is reached by a path narrow and dangerous, along the ledges. Thirteen hundred years ago John of Damascus climbed that winding path, seeking escape from a too garish world, leading by the hand his nephew Stephen, a boy ten years old. Entering that retreat, the lad never left it, and his bones lie buried within its walls. He became a wise teacher of souls

a healer of wounded hearts, a helper of those who sought the life of purity, serenity, and power. Also, he became the poet of the order and the master of its choir, and, though long dead, he still sings to us in a tender, haunting hymn which, until 1862, lay locked up in the Latin tongue, but in that year was turned into limpid, pathetic English. Listen to that voice—sweet, clear, appealing—and listening, learn how you may hear the divine Yes singing amid the discords and denials of life:

Art thou weary? Art thou languid?
  Art thou sore distressed?
Come to Me, saith One; and coming,
  Be at rest.

Hath He marks to lead me to Him,
  If He be my guide?
In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
  And His side.

If I ask Him to receive me,
  Will He say me nay?
Not till earth, and not till Heaven
  Pass away.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
  Is He sure to bless?
Saints, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs,
  Answer—"Yes."

## SOURCES OF FAITH

Without faith it is impossible; for the man who draws near to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

*Hebrews* 11: 6.

HERE we are down upon the foundations. All religion of every kind rests upon the reality of God, His righteousness, and His responsiveness. Apart from this truth our faith is a futility and a foolishness, its light no more than a firefly in the night. Yet, just as a firefly does not make its own light but gets it from the sun, so without the reality of God men would never have any idea of God, much less faith in Him. In order to come to grips with the facts let me ask, and try to answer, two questions. But first hear the counsel of George Herbert, in *The Country Parson,* in words so simple, homey, and wise that he seems to be talking to us in the cozy brilliance of the fireside: "If you ever have any doubts, do not run away from them, but always face them. If you are going through a cemetery and you think you see a ghost, go up to it and pull it to pieces. Possibly you will find that instead of being a real ghost it is only a sheet that was hung out to dry and has been forgotten by the servant."

My first question is: *What right have we to believe?*

It is surely in order to ask by what authority men make such august affirmations about God, about life, about destiny. What is there in the awful struggle of man with the forces of the material universe to suggest such a faith? Is our faith anything more than a projection of our desires into the outer world? These questions are fundamental, and the answer to them lies in the fact that faith in the reality of God, faith in the worth of life, is an endowment of normal, sane existence. Atheism, pessimism, is nowhere met with except in an erratic and unhealthy condition. The cynic is sick; something has hit him, and he goes lame. It must be so, else he would not mistake stupidity for cleverness, and acid for milk. The alternative of faith is not only denial, but a bitterness of heart in which the "pearl of great price" is dissolved and lost.

The persistence of faith in face of the dark facts of our mortal life is the most impressive fact about humanity. It is the account which life gives of itself, when it is healthy, wholesome, and free. All faith, all thought, rests upon the validity of the intuitions of our nature, to deny which is total skepticism as to all reality—and that way leads nowhere. Otherwise we know nothing, nor can we ever learn. Man does project his desire, his thought, his faith, into the outer world. But he is a part of that order, as much so as pig-iron or potash; the laws of his mind are its laws, and the response of reality justifies and confirms his faith, alike in science and in religion. By faith all his advance has been made; by faith he lives. Man was made for faith, since faith

alone releases his powers and leads them forth to conquest. So runs the record of the ages, as in the roll-call of the heroes of old in the chapter from which the text is taken, which some one has called "the Westminster Abbey of the Bible."

Our right to believe, then, is incontrovertible; it is a part both of the sanity and the sanctity of life. Its warrant is written in the very make of our nature, its instincts and intuitions, as well as in its needs and demands. No one would need religious faith if the objects of it did not exist, much less invent it. The laws of thought, which are not drawn from the outer world, and the laws of life, which are not created by thought, unite to confirm its insight. Ages of tragic and heroic experience attest both the validity and the vitality of faith; meaning by faith not the dogma of one sect or another, but that trust in the reality of God and the trustworthiness of moral and spiritual vision which underlies all sects and out-tops all creeds. Just men, devout men, have found it at once an inspiration and a revelation, as the records of religion bear testimony adown the ages. It is the greatest capacity of humanity and its noblest tradition. As Tolstoy told Gorki, no man can deny it or ignore it without thwarting his own soul, inhibiting its finest impulses, and inflicting dire injury upon his highest nature.

My second question is: *What have we a right to believe?* To-day men are perplexed, baffled, and wistfully bewildered. They want to believe, but they do not know what to believe. Cautious, critical, hesitating, they fear

to let themselves go, lest they be the dupes of fictions in the guise of facts. For that reason not a few resent any attempt to formulate faith and make a philosophy of it. Their perplexity is not to be wondered at, because we are in the midst of the profoundest revolution of religious thought since the advent of Christianity. A whole world-view is passing away before our eyes, like a dissolving scene in a motion-picture, leaving us to wonder whether anything remains unshaken. Old habits linger, old sentiments cling, new ways of thinking seem strange, cold, and unreal, and many feel like aliens in the temples of their fathers. Because this is so, because so many are so deeply troubled, I make bold to affirm that we have more right than ever to believe the highest truth our minds can think and our hearts can long for. Indeed, my wish is to expound, not simply the primary faith which is the root of all religion, but our historic and distinctive Christian faith as stated in the old formula called the Apostles' Creed;[1] the faith which grasped the crumbling classic world and reshaped it. What we need in our new and strange time is the old faith, the whole faith—no truncated faith, cut to fit our current fads of thought—if we are to deal with the problem of redemption in its tragic and gigantic modern setting. Here is the oldest compendium of Christian faith, and if we can wipe the dust of debate from our eyes, and see behind its swift, sharp phrases the Light of which it is the shadow, it will mean much to our thinking and living. It is not an argument, but an anthem;

[1] The first of a series of sermons expounding the Apostles' Creed.

not a hedge-fence, but a flag. It is not a system, but a symbol, a myth—meaning by myth, as the Greek word means, not something highly imaginative and unreal, but an attempt to body forth truth for which we have no adequate words. So, dodging no issue, and wishing only to know the truth, with no desire to win votes from either the liberal or the conservative camp, let us study our Christian faith in its height and depth and splendor, beginning at the beginning.

Hence my theme to-day, using the first phrase of a formula well-nigh two thousand years old: "*I believe in God.*" Mark well; it is not merely a declaration of opinion; it is a personal confession of faith. An opinion would be stated otherwise; it would take this form: "I believe *that* there is a God." But here we have something deeper and more intimate, at once more challenging and more satisfying: "I believe *in* God." The Gospel is capable of doctrinal exposition, and it is fertile of moral results, but in its essence it is not a system or a code, but a personal fellowship with a living God. Much, very much, about God we do not know, many things that He either does or allows fill me with wonder and terror; I cannot fathom His mind, and the mystery of His will often makes me shudder. Nevertheless, I believe *in* God, even when I cannot make clear, much less justify, His will and His way to myself or to my fellow-men. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him," cried Job, staggered and dismayed by a desolating providence; and his trust was justified at the end of his agony, adding a new vista to our vision of

God, revealing "the veiled kindness of the Father of men."

Wherefore, and by what right, do men hold such a faith, as they have held it from time immemorial? What is its basis? Life and love, joy and sorrow, pity and pain and death, the blood in the veins of man, the milk in the breast of woman, the laughter of childhood, the coming and going of days, all the old, sweet, sad human things that make our mortal life—these are the bases of faith in God. Older than argument, it is deeper than debate, as old as the home and the family, as tender as infancy and old age, as deep as grief and the grave. Men lived and died by faith in God long before philosophy was born, ages before theology had learned its alphabet. If we have ears, we may hear Vedic poets and penitential Psalmists praising God on yonder side of the Pyramids. In Egypt, five thousand years ago, Ikhnation sang of the unity and purity of God, celebrating His presence in the strange and solemn beauty of the world. From the first man has felt that everything is somehow the Voice of the Eternal, if only he has ears to hear its undertones of all-sustaining melody and blend the wonder-song in his own heart with its majestic music—in which all seeming discord is lost in one sovereign harmony. God is the reality revealed, and also concealed, in the very order of life itself, at once its meaning and its mystery.

Reason in man, whether in the individual or in the race, is a late arrival. Its function is to clarify, expound, and interpret the truth learned by living. Philosophy,

as Kant said, does not discover truth; it merely sets it in order. Faith in God is not the fruit of philosophy, but of experience of life. Logic never created that faith; logic cannot kill it. Its generation and affinity are in the big, elemental realities of life, remote from our thin abstractions—a movement in the soul like the rhythm of the tides. All the great faiths by which men live spring from impulses more vital and profound than logical reason. Pascal was right; the heart has its reasons which the reason does not know. Every argument for God has been an attempt to justify a faith already alive and active in the heart of humanity. In spite of the criticism of Kant, the four famous arguments for God may still be stated with power, but they do not prove that God exists. They only prove that He ought to exist. As Voltaire said, "If there were no God it would be necessary to invent Him"; necessary, that is, for the healthful working of the human mind. Alas, religion has been over-rationalized until it is remote from the sagacities of living wisdom, torn from its roots of which faith is the flower and fruit.

Recently I have read two books having the same title, *The Idea of God*, one by an English philosopher, the other by an American theologian. Such a study is more fascinating than any romance. It traces the history of the idea of God, showing the growing, groping mind of man trying to grasp a reality revealed in experience, but too great for explanation or expression. It makes one think of the painting by Abbey on the ceiling of the Boston Public Library, in which we see the dawning of

a nobler vision of God out of the night of superstition—like a sunrise in nature. What a multitude of thoughts, arguments, reasons, man has assembled about the central truth of his faith. Every age has its arguments; the arguments pass away and the faith remains. To-day, as both philosopher and theologian agree, the old arguments, so convincing to our fathers, are worn out and well-nigh worthless. They do not signify. Something has happened to make them obsolete. To the modern mind those "overwhelming proofs," if set forth in their old garb, stalk about like frail ghosts.

> They were mighty, but they vanished;
> Names are all they left behind them.

What has happened? Wherefore such a strange silence, as if men were smitten mute, willing to believe in God until some glib theologian tries to "prove" Him? Rattling the old reasons makes men feel as Heine said he felt when he visited an insane asylum, and for a moment the attendant left him alone with madmen! If the alternative is either the old dogmatic idea of God unmodified or no God, then men prefer no God. Not a few are deemed skeptics, if not atheists, not because they deny a Power, a Mind, higher than themselves—no one has ever held such a view—but solely because the old idea of God is not human, much less divine. Men are profoundly troubled, not only because the modern mind finds it hard to grasp the truths of faith which the heart must believe if it is to find rest, but alas, and much more, because "the public impotence of religion," as

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SEMINARY

hitherto interpreted, has been so tragically revealed. Hegel said, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, "The nation which has an evil conception of God has also a bad state, a bad government, and bad laws." Looking out over the world, men see bad states, rotten governments, unjust laws, and they know that something has gone tragically wrong with the human thought of God!

Hence the quest of a new experience of God in modern life, more revealing, more satisfying—an insight reaching through the shapes, shows and shadows of things and grasping the Reality which life hides, as sunlight hides the depths of the heavens. It is not dogmas about God, but God Himself that men seek. They begin to realize the truth of the words of Anselm, "I believe in order to know," to which they add a word equally true and too often forgotten, "I know in order to believe." More and more men see that there must be a synthesis of faith and knowledge, insight, experience, and aspiration, by which alone we may attain, if not to comprehension, at least to victorious confidence in God. Hence a revival of mysticism, a desire to drop a longer plummet and tap sources of insight and power unexplored, as of old they redug the wells long silted by neglect; a return from arid dogma to those deeper disciplines of mind and heart whereby men are made ready and worthy to receive a creative vision of "the Nameless One of a hundred names."

There is a noble passage in *War and Peace*, by Tolstoy—a picture of the tumult of Russia in the light of the Napoleonic invasion—which serves my purpose

here. It tells of a rich young nobleman who, like so many of his kind, has lived a wild, sensual, dissolute life, careless of the rights and wrongs of his fellows. On his way to St. Petersburg he falls in with an old man simply dressed, but with the light of a great peace in his face. The old man speaks to the count and tells him that he heard of his misfortune, referring to a duel resulting in the death at his hands of the lover of his wife. In the course of the talk the old man speaks of God, and at the mention of the Name a smile of scorn curled on the lips of the count, who said: "I ought to tell you that I don't believe in God."

The old man smiled, as a mother might smile at the silly saying of a child; and then, in a gentle voice, full of pity for the strange poverty of the rich young ruler, yet rich in sympathy, the old man replied: "Yes, you do not know Him, sir. You do not know Him; that is why you are unhappy. But He is here, He is within me, He is in you, and even in these scoffing words you have just uttered. If He is not, we should not be speaking of Him, sir. Whom dost thou deny? How came there within you the conception that there is such an incomprehensible Being?"

Something in the old man, who spoke earnestly, as one who stood in the radiance of a vision, touched the count deeply, and stirred in him a longing to see what the old man saw and to know what he knew. Abject, hopeless, haunted by an ill spent life, his hands red with the blood of his fellow-man—his eyes betrayed his longing to know God. Though he did not speak, the

kindly eyes of the old saint read his face and answered his unasked question: "Yes, He exists, but to know Him is hard. It is not attained by reason, but by life. The highest truth is like the purest dew. Can I hold in an impure vessel that pure dew and judge of its purity? Only by inner purification can we know Him."

Never has there been a more perfect commentary on the words of Jesus when he said: "The pure in heart see God." For that reason the wise old Bible does not argue about God. It is not a book of logic; it is a Book of Life —recording the revelation of the reality and the responsive love of God in the deep, tragic, tormented, heroic life of man. It is not the business of the Seer to "prove" things, but to make men *see* the truth. Jesus did not argue; he made men feel God always and everywhere present, to whom we can bring the questions we cannot answer, the problems we cannot solve, the sins we cannot cleanse, the sorrows we cannot heal. With Him there are no rules, no routine; only discernments. He made men glad about God, telling them that He is humble and intimate, the nearest thing in the world to us, nearer than our dearest friend. Our ideas about Him are nearly always wrong, but our love is always right; and when we trust our purest promptings and our deepest love we learn a secret—not that Jesus is God, which may be mere theology, but that God is Jesus, which is insight!

All this history and hope and vision and experience, with much else which defies analysis, lay behind the first phrase of the ancient formula: "I believe in God." God is the first fact and the final reality of life, the

ground and guarantee of our thought, and the ultimate solace of our hearts. He hath made us and not we ourselves; yea, He has made us for Himself, and we are unhappy, restless, and alone until we find our joy, our rest, our fellowship, in Him. Isaac Watts wrote the little prayer we used to say, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep," and the same hand wrote the stately hymn, which is a commentary on the ninetieth Psalm, the old, gray funeral hymn of the human race:

O God, our help in ages past,
  Our hope in times to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
  And our eternal home.

## BELIEVING UNBELIEF

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.
*Mark* 9: 24.

THERE are many brief and poignant prayers scattered here and there in the Gospels, one for almost every human need, if we have ears to hear. For the man who has been fighting the waves of difficulty, and is ready to sink, there is the prayer: "Lord, save or I perish." For the man walking in darkness, groping his way slowly in the deepening night, there is the cry: "Lord, that mine eyes might be opened." For one tortured with a sense of uncleanness, and longing to know the joy of being pure, there is the petition: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And for the man facing the shadow that waits for every man, there are the words so tender and so wise: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

But surely no prayer in the Bible is more touching in its pathos, or more true to the needs of the human heart, than that in which the sorely tried father, beneath the Mount of Transfiguration, uttered his struggling hopes and fears in behalf of his afflicted boy: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." No wonder Ritschl held it to be the pattern of all human prayer, in its grave, sincere self-abandonment, as well as in the

noble humility of its believing unbelief. It is a universal prayer, never more true to the human heart than to-day. It does not feign faith by hiding doubt, but pours out its perplexity and need in equal measure. The pleading father lays bare his own heart, and in the very act lays bare ours, linking us in a fellowship of common need and common supplication. No one can hear that cry and not feel himself akin to that far-off man in his woe, in his wish to believe, and in his bitter trial of faith by the hard facts of life.

One of the great artists of Italy painted the scene of this prayer, and left it as his dying legacy to art. With true spiritual insight, he brought the Mount of Vision and the Valley of Need near together, showing both on his canvas, thus uniting the Mercy of Christ with the Misery of Humanity. Therein he was true to the spirit of the life of Jesus, whose mission it was to bring the world of spiritual light and power and the world of human need and woe together. Evermore the Valley of Service lies at the base of the Mount of Vision, and social duty lies ready to hand following the mystical experience; and what God has joined together man must not put asunder. By the same token, if we know not the way to the Mount of Shining, whence flow the permanent fountains of power, the misery of the world, its untoward ills, its bitter griefs and black sins, will defeat us—even as the disciples of old were helpless in face of the father and his woe.

Here is a page from a vast book of human sorrow, in which there are many pages that blind us with tears.

From a child the lad had been tormented by a hideous malady, as if a demon were trying to tear him to tatters. Think of the anxiety of those years—the physicians visited, the remedies tried, the questionings of mind and bafflements of heart; how like so many stories all of us know. At last the poor man, hearing of Jesus, came to him, not hopeless but unhopeful—still ready to do anything for his boy. These are the things that try the faith of men. Beside such a tragedy, our intellectual difficulties are but dim battles in a land of shadows, half unreal. What troubles us most deeply is not doubt about propositions, but the lonely debate that goes on in the heart when one whom we love is smitten with some terrible ill. Debate about speculative issues fades into thin air alongside this long, heroic struggle of a man in behalf of a boy whom he loved more than his own life, and whose suffering was an iron in his soul. It was a breaking heart that sent forth its cry of believing unbelief, and the great heart of the Master felt the pity of it all.

How strange, how mixed, how troubled, is the tiny heart of man. Never once still from birth, it lodges many inhabitants. Love and jealousy, hope and despair, faith and doubt, jostle one another in "the multitude of our thoughts." Even the hardest skeptic, as Browning said, must be tempted at times to believe, as the loftiest saint is often tempted to doubt and deny. The two struggle in every heart, and the struggle never ends. Only a few years ago it was the fashion to say that doubt in respect to the truths of faith is due to moral im-

purity. Sometimes it is so. But not always; and the tendency to confuse honest doubt with cynical denial was checked somewhat by Edna Lyall in her story entitled *Donovan* which had a great vogue. There is a doubt born of moral perversity, but it is easily identified, being flippant and irreverent. But not all doubt may be so explained or dealt with so glibly, so self-righteously. They have learned little of life who do not know that the warfare with doubt—deep and desperate—is no incident, but a part of the life of faith. Each believing soul—aye, each doubting soul—is a battlefield, and there is no discharge from the war. Life will be over and the eternal presence won before that inner debate is adjourned.

Bunyan, who knew every turn of our pilgrim way, shows his wisdom here. In the *Holy War,* when the town of Mansoul was captured by Emmanuel, and the Alderman Diabolus had been tried and executed, Incredulity contrived to escape in the night. Search was made for him, but he could not be found. He had joined his old leader beyond the walls, and in the sequel he comes back. So also in the great pilgrim allegory, the Valley of the Shadow of Death—through which, mark you, Christian passes midway in his journey—signifies not so much physical death as that lonely horror of unbelief which no one escapes. It assailed Christian long after his burden had fallen from his back at the Cross, and he had rested in the Palace Beautiful. Such is the testimony of saintly lives in all ages. One day a friend came to Luther, sorely grieved, complaining that

he found himself at times unable to believe anything. Whereupon, to his amazement, the Reformer began praising God loudly for his confession, saying that he had long thought himself alone in that temptation, and had feared that it might be a token of divine displeasure. Thus the eternal debate lasts on into the Christian life, half the soul mistrusting God and the other half adoring Him.

During the war, while crossing the sea on a steamer, I reread the lives of Maurice, Kingsley, and John Stirling. No three men could be more unlike, and yet their lives were braided together in friendship—two of them leaders in a great Christian advance. Alas! the story of Stirling had in it the pathos of unfinished things, but his ardent and winsome spirit won a love which death could not quench. Maurice was one of the deepest and noblest minds the English Church has known; "a spiritual splendor," Gladstone called him; lofty, lovely, austere in his purity, fruitful in his thinking, and prophetic in his emphasis upon the social meaning of the Gospel—a man of profound faith, the key to which is found in his letter to his mother in her perplexity. Kingsley was a poet, a teller of tales, a passionate humanist, vivid of soul, enthusiastic, impulsive, a lover of science, and an apostle of the out-of-doors—withal, a noble preacher, who linked sanitation with salvation, and revealed what great things can be done in an English country parish.

Yet these two men, busy in the love of God and the service of man, were both tormented to the very end

by the keenest doubts. More than once Kingsley wrote to Maurice telling him that his faith was all gone, and asking for a word of comfort and cheer. Maurice, on his part, had grave misgivings of his own. For several years some member of his family died at Easter, and the day of joy began to bring with it a sense of dread. At last, on Easter day, Maurice himself lay dying, and his wife read to him the story of the walk to Emmaus, unconsciously repeating the words, "vanished out of their sight." He said, "Yes, vanished out of their sight, which means that He abideth with them forever." Later he said, looking out of the window at the people going to church, "All those men who are walking there, with their doubts and thoughts, whether frivolous thoughts or earnest thoughts, want a Friend to join himself to them and bring them out; not to quench their doubts, as I too often have done." Kingsley, as his wife tells us, came to his end with "the far look," the longing for rest and reality, and for the unfolding of the mystery of life which had fascinated and baffled him.

My purpose in recalling these inner struggles of noble minds is that we may learn that our experience of uncertainty, of misgiving, of dark doubt is not unique, and that the knowledge of how it was with others may bring solid comfort and help. If great, pure, and beautiful souls were thus pursued by doubt, and in spite of their doubts—perhaps because of them—wrought richly, surely we may take new heart and new hope. By knowing that this conflict of faith and doubt

has been appointed, for ends which even we can imagine if not define, we are forearmed in advance. All of us have "blind thoughts we know not nor can name" which darken all faith; as we have unholy thoughts which intrude unbidden into our most reverent hours. Some questions may be put aside, but the eternal issues raised by religious faith touch us too deeply to be ignored, save at our peril. Is there a God? Is God love? What is the purpose and worth of life, so brief, so broken, so beclouded? Has it a purpose? Or is it all mere chance, like a ship adrift—if we can speak of drifting when there is no direction, and no star? Why the miseries and mutilations of life, its senseless cruelties, its waste, its unspeakable griefs? Does death end all? Compared with such questions, all else sinks into insignificance. Earnest men may despair of reaching certainty and turn to smaller matters, but the old questions return to haunt us, making the heart ache. After all, perhaps it prevents our hearts from hardening, and keeps our sympathies wider than they would be.

Always we can tell the way the war of faith will go by the side the heart takes. The tormented father in the story put his heart on the side of faith. He wanted to believe, and he had faith enough to pray against his unbelief. Many are in like case to-day; they want to believe, but they find it hard to do so amid the hard facts of life. A ready-made faith is not enough; they want a faith founded upon fact—meaning by faith what Royce meant, the finding of a force, a trust, which will enable them to endure anything life can

do to them. Yet they fear the wish may be father to the faith, and the motive for belief a reason for doubt, forgetting that the same principle would apply to our unbeliefs as well as to our beliefs. So they are confused, disappointed, bereaved, desolate, one voice pleading that life is the gift of a Fatherly hand, and another voice whispering that Fatherhood is a fiction, too good to be true. For many a man to-day the only prayer left is that of the text, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief"—a prayer that never yet has been unanswered.

Some give up the fight for faith and fall into a bitter, cynical denial; but that is to err. No, let us keep the desire of the heart, its innermost bias, the set of its tide, on the side of faith, and truth will be revealed as we are ready for it. Our beliefs are not mechanical mixtures, but chemical compositions of mind, heart, and will. Down below all debatable material there are insights and instincts, fine or base prejudices, leanings and inclinations—all the property of the moral rather than the mental world—which, when blended with the reasoning process, so far from vitiating that process, are really necessary to a valid conclusion. Life and love and death, wistful hauntings of heart, needs deeper than we have fathomed, yearnings that reach beyond sense and time, no less than hard facts and cold logic, make the warp and woof of a sound faith. Gorky, in his memories of Tolstoy, tells how the sage suddenly asked him, exactly as if he were delivering a blow: "Why don't you believe in God?"

"I have no faith, Leo Nikolaevich," he replied, seeking to make the answer as sudden and devastating as the question, and that would end the matter.

"It is not true," said Tolstoy. "By nature you are a believer and you cannot get on without God. You will realize it one day. Your disbelief comes of obstinacy, because you have been hurt; the world is not what you would like. There are also some people who do not believe out of shyness. Faith, like love, requires courage and daring. One has to say to one's self, 'I believe'—and everything will come right, everything will explain itself to you. Now, you love much, and faith is only a greater love; you must love still more, and then your love will turn to faith. You were born a believer, and it is no use thwarting yourself."

Here is deep insight, but it does not mean that we are to try to make ourselves believe, forcing the will directly so as to create faith. There is such a thing as "the will to believe," but it is rather one of the "things which accompany salvation," as the wise old Bible puts it. But we can live affirmatively, keeping the heart tender, responsive, and expectant, as over against a neutral or negative attitude, living humbly and reverently, as befits the momentousness of the issues, knowing that the soul is not sufficient to be its own guide—and thus make a soil in which faith can grow and be glorified. Meantime, we can do the duty that lies next to us, trusting the promise that if any man will do the will of God as he sees it, he shall know the truth. Such

are some of the tokens of a bent toward faith, and it is no secret how many spiritual difficulties are solved by the simple wisdom of going on. As Father Faber wrote:

> The very thinking of them, thought
> Without praise or prayer,
> Gives light to know, and life to do,
> And marvelous strength to bear.

As Clement of Alexandria said, there are three stages in the life of the spirit: Faith, Knowledge, Love. Faith he defines as unfolding knowledge, and knowledge as scientific faith. He means that faith is an adventure that ends in achievement, an experiment that passes into experience. Unless a man is willing to take the risk, make the adventure, and live a life that would be foolish without God, he will remain unassured to the end, balancing probabilities, uncertain of the truth he holds and unable to win the truth that lies ahead. Whatever our woe, whatever our perplexity, let us go on, even when the way is dim, "adding to our faith, knowledge, patience, virtue, love," until we come to the Master Himself. His disciples will not do. How like the baffled, bewildered Church of to-day was that band of disciples at the foot of the Mount of Vision!

Let us go beyond the church, beyond its creeds, its rites, its dogmas, to the living Christ, and at his feet lay our ills, our woes, our doubts. At last, or soon or late, suddenly or slowly, we shall see that the hem of a human garment we clutched at, is the skirt of God

Himself; that the voice that spoke by the lake-side and from the Cross is the human voice of the Eternal—yea, and that the beauty that shone in Galilee, and which shines to-day, is the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!"

## THE FOURTH DIMENSION

According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

*Revelation* 21:17.

WHAT is the fourth dimension of life? The importance of the question, both for our thinking and living, it would be difficult to overstate. Is there a faith, a truth, a vision, an experience, which corresponds in the spiritual life to the mysterious fourth dimension so long sought by the mathematicians? If so, what precisely do we mean by it? What is this intangible yet potent something, which we seem to be missing in our day, but which we must recover if we are to prevail against the forces which threaten to engulf and destroy us? Religion answers, Yes. There is a fourth dimension which not only justifies and interprets our human life, but makes us masters of life and time and sorrow and death. Here the church of every name—Christian and Hebrew alike—agrees, and this is its supreme mission, its unique function and service to human life.

The fourth dimension of life is the supernatural. At once the modern man—critical, hesitating, skeptical—rebels, on the ground that in a world such as science unveils this idea is absurd. He is willing to admit an unknown-natural, but the supernatural—no! Of course,

the word "supernatural" is not a Bible word, but the idea is a fundamental Bible idea. Take it out, and the very soul of the Bible is lost, together with its passion and its power. Unfortunately, in our age, the supernatural is identified with the unnatural, the abnormal, or else with the spectral and uncanny, with ghosts, wraiths, or mere magic. Or it is confused with the conjectural, as when Santayana says: "The supernatural is an allegory of the natural, and renders the values of transient things under the image of eternal existences." That is to say, we believe in the supernatural, not because it is actually there, but because we need it, in order "to provide imaginative machinery for our speculations, and to give verisimilitude to our dreams." Faith, then, is a lovely fiction, and since no one can know anything of these high matters, each may fashion his dream to suit his fancy.

God forbid! If we are the dupes of a delusion, let us face the fact and say so, braving the storm like an eagle, not hiding our heads in the sand like an ostrich. If the supernatural is not the abnormal, the spectral, the magical, nor the conjectural, what, then, is it? By the supernatural we mean the super-physical, the purely spiritual, and the supremely moral. "It is something beyond our striving that claims us, invades us, in order to bring us to our true selves in union with the abiding life of God. It is more than just the natural continued, heightened, refined, perfected, raised to a higher power. It is the life of a diviner order, such as no combination of forces within the natural order could itself produce."

In a word, it is the holy; the realm of moral values and spiritual meanings, fulfilling, interpreting, and glorifying the natural order. It is what Jesus meant by the Eternal Life, which supplements the life that now is as its necessary obverse, and in some ways its antithesis.

In short, the fourth dimension of life is God, without whom our sums do not work, and our little lives are shrouded in impenetrable mystery, and end in futility. Think it all through, "as far as thought can reach," up one side and down the other, and it comes always to this: God is the meaning of the universe, and without Him we have no clue to the riddle of existence, and no hope of escape from "the weary weight of the unintelligible world." Human life, human history, is a revelation and realization of God, working toward ends worthy of such an enterprise, or it is the most hideous tragedy ever dreamed. There is nothing else for it; either we must trust God, lay hold of His dim great hand, and live in His fellowship, or face the raw horror of a fate which we can neither escape nor resist. To this ultimate alternative we come in the final analysis, where we must make choice—each in his own heart—between materialism and spirituality, and array ourselves, with Plato, on the side of the angels, or surrender to the tyranny of mud, in which Jesus and Judas sleep together in a chaos of moral confusion.

Take philosophy. Its spirit is gracious and humane, its toil noble and rewarding, but the longest pilgrimage of its quest leaves us empty-handed of the truth we

most want to know. There is always a beyond that eludes us, always a secret still to be sought. Even the basic principles of philosophy are assumptions which no man can verify. At last we come to the end of thought, as far as metaphysics wit can fly, where we must sit down on the edge of the infinite—where every ray of thought is tipped with darkness. What then? We may take the attitude of the atheist, who says that the darkness beyond is a void where all our thought is drowned. It is a blind alley, not a thoroughfare. Or we may take the attitude of the agnostic, who says that he does not know, and therein he is right. Or we may lose courage and let our insight frazzle out into vague, formless fears, peopling the final shadow with the shapes and terrors of superstition. Unless there is a fourth dimension of thought we have no answer to that question upon which all other questions rest: Does this our mortal life have real meaning and worth?

The fourth dimension of philosophy is faith. Where philosophy fails, faith flies. Faith is not knowledge; it is mixed with uncertainty, else it would not be faith. It stands midway between credulity and denial, both of which mean the end of adventure and entreaty. It does not ask for advanced information that the battle is going to be a victory; it is content with the risk and peril and moral urgency of the fight. It is not the contradiction of reason, but its fulfilment. It is, in fact, the basis of reason and its inspiration, and when reason can go no further faith trusts a reason greater and wiser than our own. Reason gives the direction; faith

makes the discovery—as Leverrier, by watching the aberrations of Uranus, detected the invisible footsteps of Neptune as she trod the solitudes of immensity. Faith, acted upon in the full light of reason, becomes the foundation of things hoped for, the prophecy of things not seen. Nay, it becomes awareness of the reality of God, the feeling of eternity in time, the assurance of the sanity and integrity of the universe. Once I heard Baron von Hügel liken the Christian life to the attitude of a little Tyrolese girl when she stretches and strains upward in order to kiss the feet of some wayside crucifix. Faith stands tiptoe while grace stoops. The life of nature still strives upward and aspires, but only the Divine redeems.

Look at that strange man on his dark cross outside the city gate. Never, in all the tides of time, has there been tragedy so complete, so crushing in its pitiless and terrifying details. All the woes of Hamlet are as nothing to the profound and poignant horror of love crucified by hate, of gentleness defeated by cruelty, of heavenly candor under the heel of low cunning. The malicious hypocrisy of Caiaphas, the petty politics of Pilate, the vulgar levity of Herod, the shriek of the multitude, and then the ghastly horror of the Place of the Skull—the mockery, the gambling, the railing. It was a scene of sickening, stifling horror, an epitome of the long tragedy of the world, and its nameles brutalities. Then we hear those sublime words—so high above our poor human nature that we may well think them supernatural—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they

do!" And, listening, the tragedy becomes a theology, the horror a revelation, the Cross a crown! Forgiveness is the fourth dimension of all the pitiful, heartbreaking tragedy of the world. Such mercy, such magnanimity, out-tops our humanity, as the Alps tower above the Pyramids.

Six hundred years ago the mighty spirit of Dante escaped from exile into the homeland of the soul, free of its foes. In Italy, in all lands where men love the things of the spirit, his name is recalled with fragrant memory, and new tribute is paid to the splendor of his genius. But the revelation of his insight was not more wonderful than the achievement of his spiritual experience. The story of his life furnished material for what the Greek poets would have made a black tragedy. Born of knightly blood, dowered with brilliant genius, an unsullied patriot, by the fickle gust of fortune he was deprived of city, home, family, position, property, and doomed to be a lonely wanderer under threat of death. Bereft of all these things, the loss of which other poets have held make life a disaster, he turned his thoughts inward, and by fellowship with God won victory over an untoward lot. For Dante the fourth dimension was mysticism, a theodicy august, subduing, in which

> There is a light above, which visible
> Makes the Creator unto every creature,
> Who only in beholding Him has peace.

Beyond that vision even faith, when glorified by great genius, cannot fly. It is the ultimate beatitude, "light

intellectual full of love, love of true good full of joy," and the victory that comes of knowing "the Love impelled that moves the sun in heaven and all the stars."

Some of us think that Lincoln was the tallest soul who has dreamed here under the sky of our new world, but how few know the spiritual drama of his life. In youth he was a fatalist, in whose philosophy miracle was myth and prayer a futility. Things will be what they will be, and human entreaty is in vain. Happily, it was a moral fatalism, in which righteousness will reign at last, whatever may be the posture of the hour. But when he was forced to be a man of action, upon whose shoulders rested the fate of a nation torn by civil war, even moral fatalism was not enough. Then began the struggle—like that in the life of Thackeray—to free himself from its clutch. There came days so dark that he was driven to his knees, as he tells us, because there was nowhere else to go. There, on his knees, what had been iron, impersonal Fate, became "our Father," responsive to human appeal, by His grace sustaining a brave man in his fight for the right. Prayer is the fourth dimension in the midst of the perplexity and helplessness of the strange medley of our lives—prayer, the key to all our bewilderments, if we have the courage, the confidence, and the patience to use it.

To-day we live in a world of racial rancor and industrial strife; a small world where races and classes are jammed together, but have not learned to live together. There is no peace, but only a truce—friction felt everywhere between races, and in industry one side striking

and the other striking back. Is this a permanent fate? Yes, unless there is a fourth dimension, unveiling reserves of Divine help on which we have not yet drawn, and springs of power in human nature not yet tapped. Otherwise, the case is hopeless and we must face a future of endless feud, with interludes of bicker and bargain. We see the futility of hate, and the insanity of greed, but we seem powerless to stop the madness of it all. Retail Christianity is not enough; there must be a wholesale effort and aspiration; for the fourth dimension of a world of strife is—Brotherhood. Nothing else or less will save us from chaos, as Carlyle told us long ago in golden words:

> No revolution ever rises above the intellectual level of those who make it, and little is gained when one false notion supplants another. But we must, some day, at last and forever, cross the line between Nonsense and Commonsense. And on that day we shall pass from Class Paternalism, originally derived from fetish fiction in times of universal ignorance, to Human Brotherhood in accordance with the nature of things and out growing knowledge of it; from Political Government to Industrial Administration; from Competition in Individualism to Individuality in Coöperation; from War and Despotism, in any form, to Peace and Liberty.

In August, 1917, on a day the memory of which will last while life lasts, I took part in the burial of 527 boys in France. To-day, as I close my eyes, I can still see those long rows of silent figures, each with a cloth thrown over it, as we read the beautiful service

of the English Church. Never did the words of Jesus have in them such music, such high, unconquerable meanings! Since then those old, haunting words have for me a new, prophetic power—even though I wear crape on my heart—when I have tried to think of that scene without their calm, victorious assurance. No other words are equal to such tragedy—youth cut down like grain, night falling before noon, death dividing divinity with God! The fourth dimension of a world of griefs and graves is the ancient, high, heroic faith of our race which defies death, in the name of the sanity of life and the insight of the soul. It is the faith of the plain man no less than of the seer, revealing that of which—when the clouds are off our souls—we dare assert immortality; but in our day this immortal faith in immortality needs to be exalted and set in the light of the eternal values.

There is a conception of the Eternal Life, revealed in the experience and teaching of Jesus, as far above our vague hints, glimpses, and dim earth-memories, as the sun is above the "will of the wisp" in a marsh. Jesus lived by "the power of an Endless Life," and by that power the Church won its early victories in the world. Then, as now, men everywhere were groping for a new power of Divine grace and a more vivid religious hope. In that period when an old civilization was dying and another was coming to birth, it was the Christian vision of the Eternal Life that gave relief and renewal; and that vision we must recapture for our troubled time. The idea of immortality popular to-day is far removed

from the vision by which the new, uprising Christianity clasped the crumbling classic world and reshaped it. Indeed, we think only of a future life—"a series of moments snipped off at one end, but not at the other"—whereas Jesus saw what man is "according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."

Here, then, is the fourth dimension of these our days and years: to know God, not as a proposition of dogma, but as a living reality; to live with Him in intimate and filial fellowship, and to realize that, though he holds the worlds in His hand, yet these "little, infinite human souls" are made in His image, and have enduring worth and are precious in His eyes. There is much in nature to appall and affright, much to stagger and dismay; but once we know that "the veiled Father of man" lives in it, over it, and beyond it, all the world is new. The stately order then goes forward to music. Nor is it always the battle chant to which it keeps step. In its song are all things; finally to be woven into one sovereign harmony—the shout of victory and the sob of defeat, the tragedy and the prophecy of history, but also the ripple of the brook over its stones, the murmur of the trees, the laughter of little children, and the thunder on the hills.

## GOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE

If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

*Matthew* 7: 11, 12.

HAVING accepted the Golden Rule as a law of action between man and man, let us now turn it the other way round and study it as a principle of revelation between man and God. The process is at once so simple and astonishing that one wonders that it has been overlooked, for it gives us a clue and inward index to what we most want to know. If some one had taught me this principle as a young man, it would have saved me long agony of mind and heart, in the days when I was slowly finding my way out of the shadow of an intolerable theology. Perhaps I can make the matter plain by appealing to the wisdom of the blessed Quakers, whose peculiar gift of calm, sure insight is a joy to all who seek to live in the spirit. In the *Journal* of Fox we read:

And I went into the Vale of Beavor, and as I went I preached repentance to the people. And one morning, sitting by the

fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me. And it was said: *All things come by Nature;* and the Elements and the Stars came over me. And as I sat still and let it alone, a living hope arose in me, and a true voice which said: *There is a living God Who made all things.* And immediately the cloud and the temptation vanished, and Life rose over all, and my heart was glad and I praised the living God.

Such is the cold shadow which all thoughtful minds have felt in the Vale of Beavor, "when the awed spirit holds its breath, blown over by the winds of death." It is the temptation to let go the high faiths of the soul in the presence of the brute facts of nature and death. Whittier takes the words of Fox as the text of his poem entitled "Revelation," in which he describes the terror of the soul at the seeming indifference of Nature to our faiths and ideals—"so careful of a single type, so careless of a single life," as Tennyson said—and how our aspirations seem to melt like a mist into its vastness. Yet both Fox and Whittier knew how to be still and listen; and in the silence they heard that "voice of gentle stillness" speaking in the soul: "Be just, be true, be merciful, revere the Word within thee: God is near." Through stars and suns, through life and death, that voice is heard; and hence the clear insight of the lines, which are among the profoundest in our literature—putting into our hand a key, opening the door into the light and love of God:

> By all that He requires of me
> I know what God Himself must be.

Here is a principle, not far off in a book of long ago, but near-by, even in our own hearts, by which we can discover and verify, each for himself, what God is and what life means. It is a principle which all alike can use, whether learned or unlearned, telling us and confirming for us what we most want to know. For, more than all else, we want to know what God is in His spirit, His character, and His purpose. Riding into Paris with a young French officer, he told me, rather sadly, that he was an atheist. When I pressed him to know what he meant, he said that of course he believed in some kind of superior Being; but, he said, if there be a God we can know nothing about Him. Yes, we can know something of God by what He requires of us, since His commandments must be an outshining of His spirit and a revelation of His character. What He would have men be is an expression of what He is in His deepest heart, as in a human home the precepts of the parents are an index to what they themselves are. Let us take this principle and set it like a candle beside the great saying of Micah, which Huxley held to be one of the profoundest flashes of insight in the whole history of man:

*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Since God requires us to do justly and to love mercy, we know that He is both just and merciful; and that is all we really need to know. Then, as Whittier says,

through life and death, through soul and sense, we know a wise, paternal purpose runs, and

> The darkness of His providence
> Is star-lit with benign intents.

The clouded face of Nature smiles, and we can trace "the moving of the Spirit's wings, and hear the song of hope she sings." Thus we have in our own hearts a pathway opened to the knowledge not only that God is, but of what spirit He is; which agrees with the saying of Jesus that if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God. As St. Francis put it, "We know as much as we do," and the daily doing of duty, if we attend to it, instead of being a drudgery to irk us, becomes a perpetual and luminous revelation of Him whose we are, and "in whose will is our peace." Life thus moves forward to music, a path shining more and more unto the perfect day, revealing its own eternal quality.

Jesus, it has been said, was a Son of Fact; he based everything on experience. Because he lived so close to God—making the will of God his bread, his meat, his milk—he knew the Divine nature as no one else had known it. But he did not ask us to take the truths of faith and the laws of character simply on his authority; he showed us how to verify them for ourselves—making them an unveiling of God, no less than an obligation of man. If we read the Sermon on the Mount in the light of this principle, it becomes a profound disclosure of God and man and their eternal life together. Of course, some

of its precepts apply only to man, and not to God at all, as in a human home obedience, for example, is the duty of children, but scarcely a duty for parents. We cannot think of applying to God the Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," or the blessing, promised to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; since God does not hunger for what, in the nature of things, is eternally His. Yet even these requirements reveal a God who is righteous and pure. But, as in a human home the duties of truthfulness, justice, faithfulnes, and love are incumbent on parent and child alike, so the common obligation of righteousness and love is binding on God as on man.

Take the great precept, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," which is enjoined upon us "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." In other words, if we are told to love our enemies in order that we may be like God, it must be that God loves His enemies—an idea which makes much that has passed for Christian theology not only obsolete, but morally absurd. Until recently, we were taught that God, instead of loving His enemies, pursued them with an everlasting punishment more horrible and more relentless than the Spanish Inquisition, at its worst, ever dreamed of, since their torments were limited to earth, but the anger of God was eternal. The Catholic theology was more humane; there was a way out through purgation: but the fires of the Protestant hell surged on in omnipotent fury forever! Plainly, if that is how God treats His enemies, He does

not obey His own precepts. Bacon was right: it is better to have no idea of God at all, than such an idea as degrades Him below man and makes Him a being whom it were an act of worship to despise.

Or, take that wonderful precept of Jesus in reply to the question of Peter: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus said unto him: "I say not unto thee, till seven times, but until seventy times seven"—that is, without limit! Such is the precept for men; that, therefore, must be the actual practice of God—a fountain of forgiveness always flowing, mercy without end! Yet it has been the chief business of theology hitherto to build a hedge fence around the love of God, limiting His forgiveness, and actually to devise ways and means whereby He could forgive at all, without injury to his honor! In the early church a great question of debate was whether sin after baptism could be forgiven! Early in the history of the church all forgiveness, all hope, was declared to end at the grave, as if the physical ordeal of death petrified man spiritually and put an end to the moral life! Seventy times seven man must forgive—to his forgiveness there must be no limit; but the forgiveness of God did not reach beyond the few fleeting years of our life on earth! Hence my saying, often repeated, that Christian theology has never shown us a God as good as a good man, and until it does reveal a God who has the mind and heart of Jesus it can never be Christian.

Here, as far as I am concerned, is the acid test of theology; never for one moment will I hold any dogma

—no matter how venerable—which falls below the truth as it is in Jesus. For that reason, most of the theology taught me as a boy I have thrown out of the window and over the wall. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" It is horrible to hear profane men take the name of God in vain, though as often as otherwise it is done thoughtlessly as a mere habits of the lips. But what shall we say of a doctrine of God, deliberately framed, which makes Him worse than the publican, loving only those who love Him, and hating with a black eternal hate those who deny or disobey Him! It is a blasphemy so awful that it makes the heart stand still! Yet this terrible blasphemy has been enthroned for ages in Christian theology, and good men have used it to play upon the fears of their fellows, making religion not a Real Presence, but a Shadow to affright and terrify. How different the sunny faith of Jesus in the perfect moral character of God, whose love is like sun and rain, falling alike on the just and the unjust in impartial benediction.

Take, finally, the Golden Rule, in which Jesus summed up all the Law and the Prophets, and read it as a revelation both of the duty of man and of the character of God. It must be read, of course, not with a mawkish sentimentalism, but with our highest moral insight; but the principle of reciprocity remains central and supreme, as binding on God as on man. At once we are faced by a question of fact. Does God do unto us as He would have us do unto Him? Then up start all the old issues, the mystery of evil, the tragedy of sin and

sorrow, and the endless debate between the pessimists with their aches and pains, and the optimists with their liniments and lotions. They see the same facts, but deal with them differently, one gathering all the shadows into one vast cloud in the imagination, the other concentrating the sunlight; whereas life, as we know it, is blended of light and shadow. The debate will never be adjourneyed, and it need not detain us now, once we know that God permits nothing to befall us that He would not welcome, if He were in training and discipline for that quality of faith and character which He would have us attain. Most of our complaints are childish—when they are not selfish, and cowardly—for we are seeking the easy way, when, as we well know, it is only by struggle that we can become strong, and only by the possibility of sin that we can become righteous. Nay, more; it is the central insight of the religion of Jesus that God suffers with us, bearing our griefs in a fellowship of sorrow and redemption.

For me the darkest mystery of life is not the austerity and seeming indifference of nature, nor yet the passionate sin of man. No, for me the coldest shadow is that fact of the congenitally depraved—those described by Tennyson as smitten by defects of will and taints of blood—and who, so handicapped, have no moral chance. Take a little child born in the long, gaunt street of a city slum, and trained, it may be, in a school of thieves, like that described in *Oliver Twist:* what moral chance does it have? It is like the lost coin in the parable, in the grip of a fate which it did not create and cannot

shape. Yet this is but one fact in a long, dark chapter in human life, wherein we read the story of the insane, the idiotic, the morally perverted; are they swept like rubbish into the waste-basket of the universe? If so, religion, and most of all the Christian religion, is a farce and failure, and we are left to make choice between sheer atheism, or else, for me at least, a stern stoicism resting upon a hard unyielding despair. But if God be the God of the Golden Rule—whose light shone upon us in the merciful face of Jesus—we are not driven to such a dark alternative. For all those denied a moral chance, either by the iniquity or stupidity of man, will have a chance, if not here, then hereafter. Nor will those who, having a chance, lose it, abuse it, or reject it, be cast away finally; for there is nothing final in this universe but the Love of God!

To be sure, it is the fashion to-day, both inside the church and outside, to be agnostic in regard to the destiny of man, and that is thought to be very wise. Agnostic we must all be, both now and always on this earth, since we cannot know; but where is our faith? Where are the grand affirmations which belong of right to Christian theology? Our theologians are driven to take refuge in agnosticism, not by the laws of faith, but by difficulties set up by their own unworthy theology; but if they rest in agnosticism, the undertaker is waiting at the door to carry out the body of Christianity. Death is busy day by day, morning, noon, and night. Soon we and all the millions now living upon the earth will have vanished, like the multitudes who walked here before us. Any re-

ligion that is indifferent to the issues thus raised, or that speaks in a stammering tongue at the gates of the grave, will be visited by the indifference which it deserves by a humanity following a forlorn path of dust in the shadow of Eternity!

For my part, long ago this vast issue was settled, both for myself and for my race, by a vision of the God of the Golden Rule on the judgment throne of the universe. The Judge of all the earth—who is the Father of our humanity, and under all the obligations of His nature and character—will do right; He alone knows all, sees all, and His mercy endureth forever. It was the boldness of a true Christian faith which made George Macdonald —half a child, half an angel, and altogether a saint—in one of his earliest stories, write these words on the tomb of one of his characters—words which I would write on the tomb of our piteous, passionate, and pathetic humanity:

> Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde;
> Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;
> As I wad do were I Lord God
> And Ye were Martin Elginbrodde.

## THE PRESENCE

Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?

*Luke* 24: 32.

If the Bible were about to be destroyed, and we could save only one flying leaf, what page would it be? Each of us would try to snatch from the flames many a precious passage, scenes as familiar and holy as the home in which we were born, dear and blessed words that have in them the music of eternity and the echo of voices long hushed. It would be hard to select from among the great Psalms—the twenty-third with its melody of faith like the Christmas shepherds, the fifty-first with its final candor of sin confessed, the one hundred and thirty-ninth celebrating the everywhereness of God. How could we part with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the story of the nativity, the sermon on the mount, and the great parables? What a host of hands would try to rescue the fourteenth chapter of St. John, to which millions have turned in hours of loneliness or heartbreak, and found help for to-day and hope for the morrow!

But, honestly, if I could have just one page of the Bible, and only one, much as I should mourn my loss, I would keep the story of the walk to Emmaus. No other scene in the book of wisdom, whose leaves are for the

healing of human hearts, is so perfect an example of that naturalization of the unseen which is the goal of religious insight and experience. It has a restraint, a dignity, a delicacy, and withal an unutterable grace, which give it every mark of authenticity, uniting the authority of beauty and the vividness of spiritual reality. Its human color and its awful yet tender disclosure blend as naturally as the earth and the sky on the horizon. It never fails me. Weary, dejected, or beshadowed, I have only to turn to that page, and there is a human accent, as of a friend standing near. The words thrill me. A radiant personality touches me. Ages of doubt and cruelty may lie between, but the light shines, and there are footsteps by my side. There the great religious ideals become real; there theology melts into fellowship.

Of all pages of the Bible none is more profoundly satisfying, none more luminously revealing. It is an epitome of Christian history and experience, in which the very genius of our faith finds focus. No theism, as such, meets our need. Philosophy is ice; religion is fire. Something deep in me approves the proposal to write underneath every painting of the crucifixion the one word, *Adequate;* and when to the cross we join the pilgrim Presence on the road to Emmaus, for me it "unlocks the gates of significance and sets free the fountains of strength." It is enough: I know that behind the dark tragedy of life there is a great tenderness, in its deepest shadow a brooding love, in its else bewildernig enigma a divine meaning to which all facts contribute. The road toward the sunset is no longer lonely and forsaken; and

at the end there is not a black silence, but a sacrament—the bread of blessing broken by a hand broken for me.

Hence the center of my thought to-day, as always, is the Figure standing at the cottage door at Emmaus, in the falling daylight, making as though he would go further. One thing is certain: the living Christ and his continuing ministry in the lives of men created Christianity, and nothing else can keep it alive. Not his teachings, not his works of mercy, but he himself is the soul of our faith; his personality its revelation, his character its verification, his presence its inspiration. Not to his personal charm or his social idealism, but to his victory over death, and his sway over the lives of men from the Unseen, must we trace the renascence of wonder, the heroic and glad enthusiasm, the new and haunting kind of goodnesss which marked the morning years of the church. No ideal, no vague and lovely memory can explain an experience so profound, a power so creative of the highest values, an influence so redeeming in the life of man.

§ 1

The scene on the road to Emmaus is not a bit of ancient history; it is a picture of an abiding reality. The pilgrim Christ is an eternal contemporary of humanity, and the record of his faith is the story of his journey adown the centuries; a commentary on the words, "And he appeared unto them in another form." In every age he has made his advent, revealing himself where the struggle for justice is fiercest, where human

need is most piteous, where the tragedy of life is sharpest; only, alas, he is not recognized, and men do not know who is leading them until he is leaving them—to continue his great errand in the world. Like the disciples of old we would fain dwell in a cottage and keep Christ with us; but that cannot be. He will abide with us long enough to interpret the scroll of prophecy and bless our bread in fellowship, but if we would abide with him we must be pilgrims too, following where no path is, save that made by his feet. Evermore the wind is on the heath, and the great adventurer beckons a laggard church to follow him in our new, clever, critical, agitated, erotic, wistful, and hurrying age.

To-day, as at Emmaus, he is with us as the great Companion in a day of appalling spiritual loneliness, in the wake of a tragedy which has left us sad, dejected, and unhopeful. Never were human bodies so jostled; never were human souls so much alone. The poignant need of the human heart to-day, as each of us can testify, is for a friend stronger than man, more tender than woman, and more intimate their either, whom time does not change nor death take away. At times, in rare moments, the sea which washes between soul and soul—"unplumbed, salt, estranging"—rolls away, and we meet spirit with spirit; but only for a brief time, so profound is our isolation. In every life there are hours when those nearest to us seem strange and far off, hours of temptation, of depression, of misgiving, when no human hand can help. Somehow, in a way known to no other, Jesus can enter, the doors being shut—a dear familiar

friend—into the innermost chamber of our hearts. It is true beyond a doubt; some of us know it as we know nothing else!

Such a fellowship is especially needed in a day when we see that the purpose of life is the development of personality, and yet the tendency of thought is toward the impersonal. The ideas of God set forth in recent philosophy leave us wondering whether he is more than personal, or less. For years, while the mind has been struggling with the difficulties of divine personality, the heart has suffered a sad loss of rich, warm, vivid fellowship with God. Faith fades, prayer dies on our lips, religion falls to a lower octave in the presence of the impersonal, in a universe which has become so vast that every man by himself is lonely in it. Here, no doubt, is the explanation of the Christward tendency in poetry, drama, and fiction, so remarkable in the last twenty years. Here, too, lies the secret of the rediscovery of Jesus in recent scholarship, leading us through the Jesus of history to the mind of Christ—the one satisfying revelation. It is an awakening, in response to a deep need, of what Goodwin called "the instinct for Christ"; a passionate yearning for a vivid sense of the personalness of God. Happy are they who know, as all may learn in the fellowship of Jesus, if they be humble and obedient of heart, the truth of the lines:

> Life within my life, than self more near,
> Thou veiled Presence infinitely clear,
> From all my nameless weariness I flee,
> And find my center and my rest in Thee.

§ 2

Nay, more, Christ is with us to-day, as on the road to Emmaus, as the one adequate Interpreter of an otherwise ambiguous and unintelligible universe—its walls pushed back into infinity, its depths an abysm no mortal can fathom. The pastor of the pilgrim fathers urged his flock, at parting from them, to expect further light to break forth from the word of God. In our day the word of God written in nature has been read in a way to dazzle and appal, revealing new light of truth and new shadows of mystery. It is a stupendous scene which science unveils—a universe vast, orderly, unfolding—now luminous and lovely, now dark and terrible, in which man seems as insignificant as a mote floating on the evening air, and as fleeting. What wonder that reflective minds are troubled about the value of life and the validity of its highest ideals. Their concern is not whether they are sinners, but whether there is anything or anybody in the universe who cares enough about us to even frown upon our sins.

The number of wistful worshipers at the altar of the unknown God in our day is very great. Many of them remain in the church, as the thing to do, carrying on by the momentum of memory and habit; but they are sorely perplexed about the meaning of life. The Russians feel more acutely than we do, perhaps—as the stories of Chekhov reveal—the agony of life without God. Ideas become deceptive, ideals a mirage, work unmeaning

monotony, and life a tedius tale ending in ennui, futility, and the fatigue of despair. Devices of escape are many. Some take refuge in music, others in revolt, others in daring speculative thinking, others in giddy-paced pleasure, and others in realistic novels, acrid and unhappy—the sternest, darkest and most pathetic of tales. In less degree the same mood is felt among us, deepened by the war and the ultimate issues evoked by its horror, as well as by the ever-present mystery of sorrow and suffering, tragedy and death, and the tedium of secular things. Such is the poignant need of the sure word of faith which Jesus brings us, alike by his life and his vision.

Now consider. Out of the fathomless depths of the universe, amid the clash of forces we may not reckon, in the fullness of time there emerged the life, personality, and character of Christ. He was neither alien nor exotic. He was one of us, growing up out of the heart of humanity, a babe, a boy, a man, browned by the sun, wet by the rain. Three swift and vivid years he taught and was put to death; but he still lives, walking up and down in the hearts of men, of all world powers making for the higher life the most potent and persuasive. Argument is not needed; the fact proves it. What must the heart of the universe be out of whose bosom was born that shining figure of heroic moral loveliness! Years ago Meredith asked:

> Into the depth that gave the rose
> Shall I with shuddering fall?

Surely not. Still less should we be terrified by dark thoughts of fatality, or blind fears we know not nor can name, in a universe out of which arose that life of love and pity and joy, revealing what God is and what man was meant to be.

Midway in history he appeared, a man among men, living in purity, power, and poise, walking in liberty by the law of love, faithful and friendly, facing the worst and finding the best, as if to show us, historically, the meaning of life, and, prophetically, the goal toward which the whole process of life is moving. His advent marked a new era, dividing time into before and after—like the emergence of personality out of animality: not another man but another kind of man. In him life passed from selfishness to otherness, and love came to perfect flower, with the result that his personality has acted thereafter as an elemental, transforming energy in the life of man. Like moral radium, in contact with him men of all ages, types, races, and ranks have found that they are set free from inner dualism, and made masters of life and death by the moral power that is in him. Here is the reality, attested by ages of experience, in heroic love, in holy character, in human service, upon which our faith rests, to expound which some contrive theologies and others sing anthems. As Markham put it in a quatrain he sent me recently:

> Here is the Truth in a little creed,
> Enough for all the roads we go:
> In Love is all the law we need,
> In Christ the only God we know.

No wonder our hearts burn within us along the way with such a pilgrim to keep us company, in whom the mighty aspirations of the heart find answer. Christ is the Yes of God to all the eager, aching, wistful yearnings of humanity, the token of our hope, the evidence of our faith. In him love finds fulfilment, and becomes the prophet of unknown revelations. Our lonely longings, our dim intuitions, our vague mysticisms—even our dark superstitions—become radiant at his touch. There is that in him which takes the stain of sin away, and heals the deep hurt of death, as singing centuries testify. His words—so bright with color—have strange cadences in them, and far-sounding melodies, evoking old, half-forgotten memories of the soul and echoes of ineffable things. Here is one who knows the restless human heart and its mysteries; and about him are gathered, as he predicted, the weary and heavy-laden whom life has defeated, those who have culture without faith and knowledge without hope—the sick of soul, the palsied of will, and those who have learned the failure of success—seeking, as of old, the forgiving word, the healing hand, which makes them know that they may still hope, for the impossible is true!

## § 3

There are three stages in the experience of Christ, and they are not unlike the three great periods of Christian history. In youth we are ardent rationalists, lovers of logic, eager to measure the mystery of Christ with

the tape-line of reason. Theology is thrilling, its majestic conceptions fascinate us. It is like the five formative centuries, in which the issues of faith were fought out and thought through in a fashion hardly equaled since. Then it dawns upon us that a man may believe all the creeds and not be a Christian; may believe in the resurrection of the body and yet be dead of soul. Slowly, through the teaching of sorrow and the deepening of life, we are drawn into the mystic way, urged by something hitherto unknown in our nature. In company with the shining ones we follow an inward path, finding new wonders in the fellowship of Christ. It is like the Middle Ages, over whose long still years there hung a nimbus of romance, and out of whose broodings there grew personalities fragrant with a wondrous aspect: a Francis preaching to the birds, an a Kempis "in a little nook with a little book." It was the poetry of faith, and it brought a bit of heaven to earth, in its art, its piety, and its gaiety.

At last, by a process untraceable, one comes to find the highest wisdom, the deepest joy, the sum of the duty and discipline of life, and the ideal of its dedication, in the words, "Follow me." Ever the reason toils to fathom the revelation of God in Christ. Ever the mystic quest goes on. But life becomes simpler, more real and rewarding, at once easier and harder, more complex in its demands yet more compelling in its persuasions, as we seek to make the will of Christ our own. It is like the practical, realistic, fact-loving, social age in which we live to-day; and as the ages agone found in Christ

satisfaction for their needs—finding him where he found them—so our age will find in "the Son of Fact" the supreme realist it seeks. Alike to mystic, rationalist, and ritualist comes the challenge, "If any man will do the will of God he shall know of the teaching." And the refrain echoes in every heart: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say." For such an adventure we need all inspiration—mystical communion, lofty worship, noble thought—but these must issue and bear fruit in the union of those who love in the service of those who need.

Once more, as at Emmaus on a sacramental eventide, the living Christ makes as though he would go further; and in that adventure lies the way out of the muddle into which the world has wandered. No timid, tepid Christianity is equal to the demands of our age. Old issues are dead, old sectarianisms are obsolete. It is a new world in which we live, with new insights, new outlooks, and we need an altogether other dimension of faith, more magnanimous, more heroic; the higher unity of things which differ, and "the eye of a fresh mind upon our tangled time." There must be a greater faith, in which the vision of the mystic and the skill of the scientist shall unite in a new synthesis of insight and endeavor. Science gives us facts and laws. Christ gives us meanings and values. These two must work together in a fraternity of fact and faith, love and law, if we are to have a triumphant life. One panacea after another has been tried and found wanting. Something deeper,

more daring, more creative and comprehensive, is needed. Let us give ourselves to it, following him who is the Life that interprets life, until the day is ended,

> And without a screen at last is seen
> The Presence in which we have always been.

Half a life ago Solovyof, a Russian seer, wrote an apocalypse in which he forecast the final battle between materialism and spirituality—the ultimate issue of history. Slowly, in his vision, the world divides into two fundamentally hostile camps; on one side Christ, on the other anti-Christ. A final effort is made to compromise, as in the days of Constantine, but, fortunately, it fails. A dire crisis ensues, a desperate battle shakes the world; and in the depth of that dark night the church, so long divided into sects, is welded into one fellowship. In the end the hordes of anti-Christ are overwhelmed at Armageddon; but not until Jew and Gentile are found fighting side by side, defending the eternal mysticism by which man lives, singing "the song of Moses and the Lamb!" Is it a fancy or a prophecy of the things that lie ahead?

> Will not our hearts within us burn
> On the darkening road,
> If a White Presence we can discern—
> Despite an ancient load?
>
> Whither goest Thou, pilgrim Friend?
> Lone Figure far ahead,
> Wilt Thou not tarry until the end—
> And break our Bread?

Follow we must amid sun or shade,
Our faith to complete,
Journeying where no path is made—
Save by His feet!

## WHO IS JESUS?

What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?
*Matthew* 22: 42.

Of course the question, as it was first asked, did not have in it the challenge which it has for us to-day. It was asked in the midst of a debate, and had reference to the Messianic ideal of the nation and the age, and not to the person of Jesus, or his place in the order of things. Whose Son will the Messiah be? Jesus asked his opponents. The son of David, was their reply. Whereupon Jesus asked a further question: If the Messiah be the son of David, how is it that David himself calls him Lord? And he quoted a line from a Psalm in proof of his point. They were outwitted by his paradox; and from that day, the evangelist tells us, no one ventured to put a question to him.

Jesus did not present himself to men as a problem, much less as a puzzle they had to solve, but as a Light, a Guide, a Way. He did not come to assert himself, but to make God known as the Father and Lover of men. None the less, because he did fulfil the ideal of the Messiah—or the Christ, if we use the Greek word—in its spiritual meaning, the question quickly came to have reference to himself, and so it has been read all

down the ages, each age answering it after its manner. When, in the circle of his intimate friends, Jesus asked the same question, he made it directly personal: "Whom say ye that I am?" Instantly Simon Peter, answering for all, said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Those men who walked with Jesus in Galilee and Judea, heard his words of truth and watched his works of mercy, had made up their minds that he was the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of man. My purpose is to ask this question of each one in this church, as if whispering it from ear to ear, on the ground that we owe it to God, to ourselves, and to humanity, to make up our minds about Jesus.

Such a question is not theoretical at all, but severely practical and directly personal. And the first thing that meets us is the amazing fact that no one else among all the teachers and way-showers of mankind makes such an appeal or confronts us with such a dilemma. Not Moses, not Plato, not the Buddha, faces us in this intimate and insistent manner. They challenge us to high ideals, noble thoughts, and heroic endeavors; but they do not knock at the door of our hearts, as Jesus does, asking us to decide who they are and what shall be our attitude toward them. Yet the first and supreme question in respect to Jesus is, not as to his teaching, nor yet as to the nature of his person, but as to our relation to him in the lonely places of the soul where he meets us. Somehow, in his own gentle manner, he enters into our hearts, as if he had a right to be there, and we find ourselves face to face with him. Either we must refuse

him company, or pledge ourselves to him, making him the Master of our hearts, not verbally, but vitally; and according as we decide we have lost or won an inward peace worth more than all the gold in all the hills.

Aboard an East Coast train from Scotland to London, in the blazing days of war, a British officer sat opposite me. Having endured a lecture of mine in Edinburgh the evening before, he made himself known, and we had such a talk as one often had in those days when the soul of man was near the surface. As he left the car at York he gave me a book he had been reading, about which I had been curious, saying that it was worth my while to read it, because it would show me the state of mind of many earnest men who still go to church, and how they do not always follow what they hear in the pulpit. With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand he vanished into the night. The book was entitled *The Diary of a Church-Goer*, and it proved to be of such unusual interest and charm that even my favorite *Moby Dick* had to wait, just when Father Mapple was in the middle of his sermon on Jonah and the Whale—such is the patient courtesy of great books.

There was no name on the title-page, but a new edition tells us that it was written by the late Lord Courtney of Penwith, whose habit it was for several years to jot down his meditations and impressions, and even his criticisms, when he returned from church. It is a valuable book for a minister, if only to show him how little some of his hearers may agree with what is said in the pulpit, and in what ways they are helped or repelled by

the service. For example, a lovely Easter day was spoiled for the diarist by the use of the Athanasian Creed, not exclusively, but principally, on account of its damnatory clauses, but because of "its pretentious pedantry, through which shines no glimpse of the grace of the Gospel." It was so remote alike from the tender beauty of the Gospel and the fresh wonder of the spring morning; not a psalm of life, but the work of "minds moving in barren intellectual exercises aloof from love and grace and fellowship." An ugly, arid symbol, it crashed into the service like a stone thrown through the window. The rest of the morning service covered him "like a pall," so much so that he did not partake of the communion.

Here was a noble and reverent mind who loved the church for its atmosphere of calm, its spirit of fellowship, and the distilled wisdom of the ages in its teaching. Its ancient houses of service, built with hands, helped him to dwell in a House not made with hands. When the oldest narratives of history were read, the sense that he was akin to those long-dead singers was uplifting. The exhortations of St. Paul stimulated his courage, and the light of the Gospels flamed afresh when the central Figure was revealed in them walking with God, fulfilled of God, revealing the way of perfect life which leads to victory over death. The Psalms made him aware of the encompassing God, and the great pages of the prophets were like a great sky full of faithful guiding stars. At times, he knew not how or why, through lines so familiar that he could anticipate

the reader, there would break a light as of heaven itself, and he was lifted into a sense of fellowship with countless generations of men seeking and finding God. As we may read on a lovely page:

> Yet it has happened—one knows not how—it will doubtless happen again—one cannot tell when—that, as the verses follow one another, suddenly out of the well-known story there comes a strange, thrilling sense of heights and depths never before scaled or plumbed. Something in the air, something in ourselves, something, it may be, in the voice of the reader, in sunny mornings, in country churches, when the scents and sounds of summer come through open windows, in the equable atmosphere of some vast minster, when the words spoken at the lectern are encompassed with stillness—under all varying circumstances, defying calculation and explanation—the new comes out of the old, the passion out of the commonplace, and we say within ourselves, "*This thing is of God.*"

There is no mention of preaching in the Diary. If the Diarist listened to sermons at all, they must have been satisfying, or else he refrained from comment—as Pepys did not. Now, my reason for speaking of this Diary is, first, because of its beauty, its sincerity, and the sweet religious air that breathes through it; and, second, because, as a fact, all through the pages the writer is trying, honestly and earnestly, to make up his mind about Jesus. Early in the Diary we read: "I have for some time been drawing to a resolution to undertake a particular task. I want to force my mind to answer the question, "What have I come to think of Christ?' " He touches upon many questions—providence, fate, prayer,

and other deep issues—but he always comes back to the question of Christ. He takes it up, lays it down, and takes it up again. He studies what Christ thought of himself, what his disciples, during his lifetime, thought of him, what St. Paul thought, and what the Christian ages have thought. Then he returns to the question, "What have *I* come to think about Christ?" He feels that if he can place Jesus, everything else will fall into its place. Other issues do not work out while that mystery is unsolved. There is no question in his mind as to following Christ: so much is sure, but he wants to decide as to who he is. He never quite makes up his mind, but he tends to the conclusion that Jesus was only a man, albeit the noblest, purest, wisest of the sons of men. Yet he has grave misgivings about such a conclusion, as well he may, because, if so much is certain, more would seem to be sure.

It is a far cry from Lord Courtney, trying to make up his mind about Jesus in a vine-covered English church, to our tousled, hurrying, unworshipful age, groping its way with no spiritual program and little "open vision." The inner issue which troubled his honest mind is still unsolved by many who, alas, seem well-nigh to have lost his habit of culture and piety. Much has happened betimes; a world view is passing away, and the inner attitude of men has altered. Something seems to have broken in us, dividing us from our fathers, as if the problems of life had now a different basis of thought, and old ways of thinking had become unreal. Yet that is only seeming, and we have to face the issue

which agitated that good man at the altar of prayer, albeit in a new and more difficult setting. For it is as true of us—each of us, since we may not delegate this matter to others—as it was of that earnest seeker after truth, that our attitude toward Jesus may not measure the Reality, but it does determine our place in the spiritual order, our peace of mind and heart, and the power of our lives.

How can we make up our minds about Christ? Surely the noble hesitation of Lord Courtney is wiser and more truly reasonable than any glib and final decision on such a question. At least, it recognized not only the difficulties but the vastness of the question, in the presence of which humility is wisdom. Kant made protest when his biographer placed his name too near that of Jesus, as if they were to be mentioned together. Speaking of the two names, he said: "The one is holy; the other is that of a poor bungler doing his best to interpret Him." First of all, if we are to make up our minds about Christ, we must begin by giving our hearts to him—as we must do with any teacher whose truth we seek to know. As with any other teacher to whom we put our souls to school, we must keep an open mind and an honest, responsive heart, and not make our own ideas the measure of the truth we seek. If we cannot fathom the genius of Shakspere, it need not surprise us if the mystery of Jesus out-tops us. For in the Life of Jesus the human and the Divine shade into each other, without any dividing line, showing us what the good is at which our living should aim. Let me bear testimony and say

frankly that there are many questions about Christ which I cannot fathom, much less solve. Time was when these difficulties gave me the keenest distress, but my distress was due, as I now see, entirely to my own vanity. For, if I could measure the mystery of Christ, it would show me that he is no greater, no deeper, no wiser than I am. So that, to-day, my old difficulties are a part of the basis of my faith in the immeasurable richness of his revelation. After all, we are not asked to understand Christ, but to follow and obey him; and if we are to understand him, even in a little way, it will be because we obey him.

For that reason, it is wise to begin, as we must begin if we are to think in a modern way, with the human Christ. As some one has said, if Christ became man, it is necessary to know what kind of a man he became; and the emphasis upon Jesus as a man, which began with Renan, has been rich in gains both to faith and life. If Jesus was unable to sin, then it was no merit to have resisted the temptation. If he was omniscient, then it needed no courage to face the Cross. If he did not assume a real humanity, then what he did not assume he did not redeem. We must start from the fact that he was very man, if ever we are to learn that the very God dwelt in him. Besides, the Jesus of history is one who can be known as a real man, living a real human life, touched with our weariness and gray with the dust of the old-world human way. When we sit down to the Gospel narratives, and study them, and dye our minds in their color, we know that we are dealing with

reality, and that reality, so rich and warm and winsome, becomes the basis of a faith that is real.

As with the Bible, so with its central Figure; to read it as any other book is the surest way to learn that it is unlike any other book. To know the historic Jesus is the path to fellowship with the Eternal Christ. Unfortunately, not many take the time and pains to know the Jesus of the Gospels, and as a result, One who should be a living reality is only a "dimly luminous symbol of the good." For such neglect there is no excuse, and the wonder is that we have any fellowship with Christ at all. Let a man adjourn his doubts, take the little Book that tells the story of Jesus and read it—nay, more, think and pray and live his way into the mind of the Master, into his thought of God and life and duty—and Jesus will become as real as the earth on which he walks. Let him bring not only his intellect but his own heart to the investigation, and he will learn why the church has held that Jesus was truly human, but also that somehow God was actually in him in a unique and redeeming sense. In short, that the humanitarian view of Christ, noble and lovely, as it is, simply does not account for the facts of his life or his influence as a Gulf Stream in history. Still less does it account for what he has been, and is now, to the millions who love, trust, and follow him—often, alas, afar off—to say nothing of those few who have paid to him the last full measure of devotion.

Take one scene from that life of beauty, pity, and comradeship. One day, while Jesus was teaching, a

messenger came telling him that a little girl was ill, and asking his aid. He dropped everything and went, as he always did at the cry of need. While on the way another runner came telling him not to go to further trouble, as the little girl was dead. But Jesus went on. No wonder his disciples were amazed beyond words. For them, as for us, death was final. *Yet Jesus went on.* Such faith, such courage, such refusal to accept death as final, fills one with awe. What would you not give for a faith like that? He took the little girl by the hand and said, "My little girl, arise!" Of course, if that story were told of any one else, you would not believe it. Nor would I. But when we go with Jesus to the scene, how is it? How empty our jargon about the laws of nature seems in the Presence of One whose every gesture was an event, as if we knew enough of the laws of nature to make us implacably wise! What if there be laws of nature whereof we have not even dreamed, much less made use of? It behooves us to keep an open mind and a tender heart if we are to know the truth as it is in Jesus.

When I was a lad one of our neighbors had an ugly way with him when he was in his cups. Even now I can feel the white-hot indignation that swept over me when we heard him beating his family. Somewhere, the details of which he never told, Jesus met him and they had dealings. After that, he stood up straight and strong and faithful, and his home became sweet, wholesome and happy. Twenty years passed, and the home was never again beshadowed until the father died. What think you of One who can work such a wonder? Is he not just the

friend whom you need to take command of the sad tangle of your days? Surely here is a spirit, a power, a love, a fellowship, to which we can trust all that we are and all we hope to be, forever! No wonder all sorts of men—the high, the low, the learned, the unlearned —have found in Jesus a clue to the dark riddle of the world in which we are set to follow the good in the midst of shadows, and where death seems the vast coffin lid of a loveless universe descending upon us at last. And a few, having a heart for high adventure, have

> Learned His great language, caught His clear accents,
> Made Him their pattern, to live or die.

Let me put it another way, translating into simple terms the truth held by Athanasius—the truth that "God of every God" dwelt in a real human life; which means, also, that human nature is great enough to enshrine the fullness of God. Does the life of Jesus so stir our own hearts that we are made aware that his spirit, his way of living, is the divine intention for man? If we answer that inquiry in the affirmative—and it is hard to know how any one can be honest with his own heart and answer it otherwise—then another question follows: Does not the divine intention for man, confirmed by our own hearts, reveal the nature of God? As one of our poets has said:

> By all that He requires of me
> I know what He Himself must be.

That is, does the life of Jesus move us, by the action of spirit on spirit, to live for the same ends and in a like

spirit? Here is a purely spiritual appeal, and each one may test for himself whether or not following Jesus does not make for fullness and satisfaction of soul.

Love is a kind of life which we all know when we see it, and still more when we live it. *For me, God is what Jesus lived;* that is what I mean by the Divinity of Christ. If you know, or can imagine, or have ever dreamed of anything more divine than the love which Jesus lived, pray tell it to the world! If we are to make the best of life, we must follow the best and give ourselves loyally to it. Life cannot wait until all riddles are solved, and therefore the wise poet was truly wise when he wrote, giving his heart to Jesus in final dedication, the while he waited for a clearer light to dawn:

If Jesus Christ is a man—
  And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
  And to Him I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God—
  And the only God—I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
  The earth, the sea, and the air.

## THE MIND OF CHRIST

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ.
*Philippians* 11:5.

But we have the mind of Christ.
*I Corinthians* 11:16.

WHILE these two texts tell the same truth, they do so with different accent and emphasis. The first has to do with the moral and spiritual process by which the mind of Jesus attained to the truth—his courage, his purity, his august humility, his abject obedience. The second is concerned not with the process, but with the result obtained, the truth revealed, the total experience and achievement of the Life of Jesus—its piercing spiritual intelligence, its trophy won from the Eternal Mystery. If we join the two together, we have both the process and the result, the vision of that Radiant Spirit, and the truth which its insight and experience unveiled.

If we turn to the context of the second text we find that mention is made of three kinds of mind. There is, first, the carnal mind: low, beastly, blind, swayed by passion and prejudice, to which divine things are foolish and unreal—like Calaban upon Setebos. Then there is a higher mind, described in our version as a "natural mind"—an unfortunate term, because it implies that the highest mind is unnatural. The exact word used is

"psychical," but as that word is now employed it may easily mislead us from the meaning of St. Paul. If we use the word "intellectual" we are not far from his meaning, and, oddly enough, he anticipated much of the thought of our day. On the first page of his *Creative Evolution,* Bergson tells us that the intellect "is an appendage to the faculty of action," and, later, that it has "a natural inability to comprehend life." So also Kant, who held that pure reason alone cannot know reality, but only appearance. These thinkers do not mean to belittle intellect, but simply to indicate, in different ways, its limit.

They agree that we cannot know living reality by simply thinking about it, still less by watching it and analyzing it. We must be in it and of it, must enter into it by intuitive sympathy, and know it, as Bergson says, "after the fashion of one who loves." The tragedy of Hamlet was not the creation of pure reason, but of swift and vivid artistic insight; and no doubt that haunting figure was as much a wonder to Shakspere as he is to us. Nor was it by intellect alone that St. Paul wrote his Hymn of Love, all-believing, all-enduring. So far the Apostle and the philosophers agree, but here their ways part. Kant saved the day by appeal to the practical reason, and Bergson to the intuitive mind, whereas St. Paul appeals to a higher mind which he calls "spiritual." Instead of defining it, the Apostle shows what it is by a concrete example; it is the Mind of Christ.

Hence my theme to-day, which is an attempt to answer three questions: What is the Mind of Christ? What

did St. Paul mean when he said, "We have the Mind of Christ"? How can we make the Mind of Christ our own? When we speak of the mind of Shakspere, of Raphael, of Lincoln, of Edison, we mean something more than mental traits and the glitter of genius. Each of these names stands for a way of thinking, a point of view, a body of thought, an insight unique, definite, distinct, and forever precious to our race. So much is this true that, if we pick up an old play which Shakspere rewrote, we can tell, almost infallibly, each line that he altered or added. Wherever his pen touched the page we can feel the quality of his spirit, his strength, his sanity, his forgiving pity. Any one who has studied Lincoln, read his words, followed his footsteps, and learned his spirit, can tell—not in detail, perhaps, but in a very real way—what he would think on almost any theme. We know his angle of vision, his justice, his veracity, his relentless logic, his limitless charity; they are a part of the sacred treasure of this land where he lived and dreamed.

Some day a great book will be written, entitled *The Intellect of Jesus and the Mind of Christ;* but who is sufficient for such an undertaking? For, by the Mind of Christ we mean something more than his capacity for thinking, albeit the depth of his mind, its vitality, its sanity, its lucid purity, no less than the sweep and grandeur of its conceptions, dazzle us. No, we mean his insight, his outlook, his motive, his thought, his knowledge; the truth which his mind, his personality, his character revealed; the total achievement of his expe-

rience. Nor do we have any doubt as to the supreme reality in his faith and vision. To the Mind of Christ the first truth and the last, the central, sovereign, all-transfiguring reality, is God, who is Love. From that fountain all his life flowed; in the light of that truth life yielded its meaning. Everything far and near, great and small—the crash of an empire, the fall of a sparrow—he saw in its relation to God. Nothing, in his thought, was separate from God and complete in itself. The secret of beauty in flower and sunset, in the bird that sings and the soul that aspires, is holiness, and the flower of holiness is beauty.

From this vision of the holiness of beauty came his clear conviction of the hope of all lost things, and his joy in reclaiming them, at any cost, to the beauty of holiness. Upon this earth there is nothing more unutterably beautiful, beyond all power of poet-words to tell, than the vision of God in the Mind of Christ. It is the supreme masterpiece, the ultimate reality so far as we can know it, or need to know it, here or hereafter—the mind of God in humanity. Whatever else may grow dim, whatever may be broken or lost, the vision of God in Christ remains the everlasting treasure of humanity; its test of truth, its standard of values, its ideal of judgment. It rebukes pessimism. It evokes adoration. It lights up the universe like a sunrise, showing us the meaning and worth of the life of man, heir of two worlds and haunted by eternal to-morrows. Wherever it is trusted and followed, it has proved itself the fountain of light and hope and beauty of character, making our

fleeting mortal day "a many-splendored thing," and death a light-fringed mystery.

What did St. Paul mean when he said that we have the Mind of Christ? He must have meant not only that we possess it as a treasure, but that we are able to share it, albeit not one of us, nor all of us together, can contain it. Our chalice soon overflows, and the sea is still full. It is like the air and the sunlight, which the flowers have in common, and from which each derives its life and its beauty of form and color. It is like looking at the hushed awe of sunset; there is beauty enough for each, beauty enough for all, yet the wonder is not diminished. In every Christ-anointed mind we find some quality of the Mind of Christ; in St. Francis his gaiety, in Molinos his serenity, in Woolman his pity, in Drummond his courtesy; but it is only in the fellowship of myriad minds that the wonder is revealed. That is to say, it is in our communal life, in our capacity as a "Beloved Community" that we possess the Mind of Christ and incarnate it. If we are to know the truth as it is in Jesus, we can only know it together, each sharing the vision of all.

What do the labels of our sects mean in that Communion of Insight which has as its deposit the glory of the Mind of Christ? Nothing, and less than nothing every year. There must be a greater Christianity in which old differences are not merely merged but submerged and forgotten; a deeper experience of things in common, and a higher unity of things which differ. It must be more than church unity, though that may

and will be profoundly affected by it. Not by might, not by power, but by a deeper and more daring spiritual life derived and possessed through a vivid contact with the Living Christ, will a larger Christianity be realized. Its great word is "fellowship," at once creative and inclusive; a fellowship with Christ, and through him with all who share his life and love and labor. Its task is to make the experience of spiritual fellowship as wide as the race, whereby the Life of God which found focus and functioned in Christ may, through him, find fulfilment in the Kingdom of God.

Here lies the secret of Christian unity and the seat of authority in faith. Not what the dogmatists argue, but what the humblest soul learns of the Mind of Christ, is what matters most. Our real unity is not an argument, but a fellowship in which the resources of the higher mind are revealed and the deep things of God are disclosed. Let the church seek to know the Mind of Christ and to be guided by it, and its discords will be healed and its unity in variety unveiled in the beauty of holiness. There are thousands of saints in every communion, and some outside the border of all our systems—faithful souls, humble and unknown to fame—who show in their lives "the lineaments of Gospel books." They are the proof of faith and the salt of the earth. A poor woman in India, broken by bereavement, asked the missionary, "Are you a Jesus-thinker?"—the most perfect description ever imagined of what a Christian ought to be. By as much as we live and think in the Mind of Christ, by so much do we find the center where all

strands of truth are woven into one seamless robe of light!

How can we make the Mind of Christ our own? Here we may go back to the first text and study the steps by which Jesus attained to the truth—his courage, his love, his humility, his obedience. In all education there are three things: awakening, assimilation, and expression. Once the deep desire of the soul for truth is awake, its training in the appropriation of truth begins. All education rests upon our capacity to take other minds into our own, first as guests, then as guides and friends. If we wish to take the mind of Shakspere into our own, to the measure of our power, we read his plays, study his age and his art, and live with him until we think as he thought and see life as he saw it. When we love a father, a mother, a friend, a teacher, we admit them into our hearts and make their spirit our own. Thus Monica lived in Augustine until, at last, her purity by the grace of God, disinfected him of his sensualism and saved him from the pit. Carlyle, in his *Reminiscences*, tells us that the life of his father was the sunken pillar on which his own life stood, and to the very end he felt the heart of his mother beating in his own. Thus by inheritance, as well as by assimilation, the minds of others become a part of our nature, enter into us, sway us, and bless or injure us.

The process is the same in respect to the Mind of Christ; and this is what is meant by mysticism—not something dreamy and unreal, vague and unattainable, much less occult and uncanny, but a thing not only real

but usable. After this manner what is ideally true becomes actually true and at last actively true, finding expression in our lives and embodiment in our character. If we are to have the Mind that was in Christ, we must have the courage to make trial of his way, as he did—humbly, obediently, faithfully, no matter where it may lead. We must live with him, love him, obey him, must study his words, brood over his life, that we may come to think of God, of man, of life, as he did—trusting God with his trust, loving our fellow-man with his love, and looking upon life with his still, clear vision. Those who pray "In his Name" are not always those who use his name, and think no prayer valid without it—no, but those who, having his mind, pray in his Spirit, as he would pray, asking for the things for which he would ask, and in his great and simple faith. So St. Paul lived, making it the mark of the prize of his high endeavor, until, at last, he could say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." How far we are from such an attainment, knowing little more than the alphabet of the Mind of Christ!

How can we share such an experience? First of all, here is the book of the Life of Jesus—a Book of "white samite, mystic, wonderful"—aglow with his presence, instinct with the atmosphere of his personality, and ineffably rich with his wisdom and faith. How often have we read the Gospels during the last five years? How much time have we given in our whole lives to the study of the ways and words of Jesus? Have we given Jesus a chance to teach us his truth? Here, in a Book of im-

mortal loveliness, is his very soul—"he himself with his human air"—and to know him in the days of his flesh is the first approach to his mind. It is possible to read the Gospel record—read it with insight and imagination—until we actually think the thoughts of Jesus after him and live in his Mind and Faith. What is more worth doing? What is half so important? Yet we leave it unread, as if we trusted to some magic, some emotional impulse, to teach us the truth. If we studied music, or poetry, or science, no more than we study Jesus, we should know nothing of either. "Learn of me," said Jesus, "and ye shall find rest of soul"; but we seem to think that the highest truth can be learned without thought, study, discipline!

To-day, as in the past, the promise stands true: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them." The capacity for religion is a native endowment of man, but its culture, its high truths, are realized only in fellowship. Yet men seem to shun religious fellowship, they turn away from the church, each going his lonely way, seeking without finding. Every great, creative movement in Christian history began, first, in the fellowship of a little group, and then spread to the multitude. Wesley with his "Holy Club," Newman with his circle at Oxford, are examples. In the fellowship of faith, prayer, and service they sought together what none may know alone, and released in their times a new and haunting power, both for individual redemption and social regeneration. At last, the church will be driven back to this deep Law of Fellowship, if it is to know the Mind of Christ

for our troubled and bewildered age. Organization is not fellowship. Propaganda is not evangelism. Numbers do not count; money does not signify. If we really want to know the Mind of Christ for the issues of our age—want it, that is, in order to obey it—we must take time for fellowship, time to weave or repair the ties of spiritual brotherhood, time to listen until the awe of his presence hushes our chatter, and reveals his way and his will.

For each of us the Mind of Christ, if we know how to use it, ought to be a kind of Standard Dictionary of faith, duty, and life. If a problem perplexes, we need only lift it into the calm, clear light of the Spirit and Mind of Jesus, and it is astonishing how it lights up. Take such words as *God, life, faith, love, forgiveness, pride, money, labor, snobbishness, sex,* and see what different meanings they have as they are read in the light of the Mind of Jesus. Or, when the shadow of sorrow falls, taking from us one greatly loved and leaving us forlorn, if we take down the Dictionary of Christ and look up the word *death,* we may learn its real meaning. How luminous it is, revealing a brightness on the other side of the cloud, giving us a glimpse of a tenderness in the hardness of life, a meaning in its mystery, a purpose in its pitiful broken beauty! Such a habit of looking up meanings in Christ, if reverently used in the home, in the office, will add a new dimension to life.

Something we have missed, something that answers to our deepest need and yearning, if we do not know the

Mind of Christ. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which we may well sell all our sects, all our traditions, all our dogmas. To know him is an education in the truth that makes us free, since in him abstractions are made concrete. In fellowship with him faith becomes for the first time really our own, and not simply a tradition. No dogma that does not stand true in the light of his Mind should have any place or part in Christian Faith. By that test, and by that test alone, our creeds must be tried. In the mysterious largeness of his mind, our littleness of mind, our narrowness of sympathy, our dimness of vision, will be lost and forgotten, as the shadows and fears of night vanish in the glory of sunrise!

Yes, it is true; we have the Mind of Christ, the one certain guide in an else uncertain world; but we have not begun to fathom its depth, much less to follow the long reaches of its vision. It makes our old dogmatisms and our new pragmatisms alike inadequate, unsatisfying. It is a great step forward, and it is slowly changing the spirit and temper and outlook of the church—the discovery that in the Mind of Christ is the way, the truth, and the life for our baffled humanity. It means much that we have a vision of Jesus, if as yet it is only the Jesus of practical service. At last, the clouds are lifting, and we do see his earthly Life in all its Divine compassion and simplicity, and we are nobly emulous to imitate it. But we cannot stop there; we cannot live that life by imitation. We can only live it by union, by fellowship with the Life that never dies, by the fulfilment of the prayer:

Whatever way my life decline,
I felt, I feel though left alone,
Thy Being working in my own,
The footsteps of Thy life in mine.

## THE WINTER OF JESUS

And it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

*John* 10:22, 23.

It was the feast of the dedication, in honor of the day when the temple was reconsecrated after its defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes. The festival fell in midwinter, and one can see the Master as he walked to and fro in the famous portico or colonnade which ran along the eastern side of the temple, affording some shelter from the stormy weather. Across the valley he could see the gaunt, gray hills in their winter bareness, and if snow lay on Mount Olivet it must have lent that aloofness to the scene which the mysticism of winter gives to a familiar landscape. Even he had to taste the ordinary privations and discomforts of the year. Yet he suffered nothing to stop his labor, and through the little window of this text we see how in all seasons, bleak as well as bright, Jesus went on with his work.

The Galilean ministry had been like a summer, fruitful in joy and service, and many a white flower of hope had bloomed in the radiance of his Gospel; but in Jerusalem it was different. There he met criticism, suspicion, skepticism, and as his enemies gathered round him, who does not feel, with Augustine, the aptness of

the following words, *"and it was winter"?* What made the winter of Jesus was not the wind, but the attitude of icy hostility and inhospitality to his truth. When his critics could not answer his arguments, they lifted stones to fling at him in baffled irritation, till he was obliged to withdraw. That was the real winter of Jesus. What drove him from the city and the temple was not physical discomfort, but the rancor and resistance of men who rendered his efforts barren. How sensitive he was always, for all his courage and steadiness of purpose! Trust thrilled him like a sunrise; love won him instantly. But frivolity saddened him, and unkindness made his heart ache with pity for the hardness of the heart of man.

More and more, in those closing days, his words were edged with irony. Thirlwall, in his famous essay on "The Irony of Sophocles," begins with the remark that "some readers may be a little surprised to see irony ascribed to a tragic poet." There need be no surprise, for we find irony even in Jesus, who was a poet, and whose life was a great tragic poem. And it was justified, for those men who gathered round him in the temple porch did not want to know the truth, but only wished for an excuse to argue at noonday about the possibility of sunlight; seeking the while to trap and trip him in his words, in the hope of finding a pretext to accuse him and put him to death. They were in the position of many who, defiant of the demands of the Gospel in behalf of noble living, pretend to make intellectual difficulties about the Gospel a weapon for parrying its moral

claims. Such hypocrisy was worthy of the scorn of Jesus, as it deserves the indignation of all serious men.

Who were the men who by their attitude of antagonism and unbelief made the life of Jesus wintry? They were the religious leaders of his day, the leaders of the old historic church of the people of his fathers! Let us never forget—how can we forget?—that the most terrible words ever utterd by that gentle Teacher, the most scathing and blistering denunciation in the annals of literature, were aimed at the church! How often since that day has his own church, by its crude literalism, its hollow formalism, its narrow dogmatism, its wealth and pride and corruption, helped to make the long winter of Jesus in the world. When faith grows dim, ritual becomes more elaborate and ornate, hiding in stately form an emptiness of heart—and it is winter! Petty literalism freezes the glowing poetry of faith in icy prose, denuding it of life and loveliness, leaving it as bare as a wind-swept hillside—and again it is winter! When the church boasts of its power, its prestige, its aristocracy, or uses the arm of the state to fortify its authority, or imagines that legitimate iniquity is opposed to faith—once more it is winter!

Nor, again, is that all. Rationalism, be it in the church or outside, and it is much the same whether it argue pro or con, strips life bare of summer life and beauty. It is wrong, in principle, not because religion is unreasonable, but because we must not make one faculty of mind the measure of reality. Logic can make a sewing-machine, but it never yet has bowed the head

before the hushed awe of a sunset. The heart hath reasons not less than the head. Faith must be the fruit of the total result of the freest use of all the powers of mind and heart by which men obtain truth. Instead of making logic a test of what truth ought to be, we must make truth a test of what we ought to be. The theologian draws his little circle, the skeptic draws another, and each refuses to accept anything not encompassed by his definition. They are as much alike as two of a kind, and both shut out more, much more, than they take in. No, let us keep an open mind and a tender heart, free and responsive to all the persuasions of life, and, above all, a central point of deep experience that enables us to go out with equal radius-length in all directions. So and only so can we be really free in our thought and faith and hope.

What then should be our attitude toward the church with all its faults, its vanities, and its awful deficit between profession and performance? Should we turn against it, disgusted and embittered, and hate it because, perhaps, in other days and other lands it was unjust, unholy, and often cruel? Many, very many, have done that, but Jesus did not do so. Nor should we. Marriage is often a tragic failure, but that is the more reason why, instead of abandoning it, we should learn to look on bridal love with a deeper reverence. The state has all too often been despotic, but that does not lead a lover of law to become an anarchist. If we listen to history, it is not to the men who turn away from the church in anger, much less to those who hold their be-

liefs loosely or cheaply, that our new visions of truth come. Nor is it from among those who are indifferent to the old that God selects His prophets of the new. Luther, Wesley, Woolman, Channing—like Robertson, Maurice, and Beecher later—stood in the historic tradition of faith and piety. They became reformers because they were deeply religious, and so in earnest that they got out of the old church all that it had to give. Always the renewals of faith, the redeeming movements in religious history, come from within the church, not from the outside. Mere protest, mere inconoclasm, useful as it may be, has no fertilizing, constructive, creative power.

If the church has so often helped to make the winter of Jesus, what shall we say of the world outside! High on the church spire is the cross, emblem of an infinite pity, symbol of all the sweet and saving influence of life, yet think what goes on underneath it! In one of his London fantasies, Robert Hichens describes two men, Julian and Valentine, driving late on a wet winter evening through the vice and frivolity of Piccadilly. They were in the comparative dimness of Shaftsbury avenue—

> And then a huge red cross on a black background started out of the gloom above a playhouse. Julian shuddered at it visibly. "I see things to-night much more clearly than usual," he said. "Of course I go about every day in Piccadilly, St. James street, everywhere; but it is as if my eyes had been always shut, and now they are open. I can see London to-night. And that cross looked so devilishly ironical up there, as if it were silently laughing at the tumult in the rain.

Not devilishly ironical, surely, but divinely pathetic, for it is the disobedience of ordinary life to the uplifted cross that makes the winter and tragedy of the world. The Crucified, himself the supreme obedience, did not laugh over his own city but wept, even as he weeps over London—and over our own city—at the chill tumult in the rain. Who can measure the ingratitude of the world to the spirit of Jesus! Ingratitude is always one of the most hopeless and saddening features of life. In one respect, it is an appalling form of blindness, as well as of brutal selfishness. Bacon's "three unluckiest vices of all others, Disloyalty, Ingratitude, and Insolency," hang together—like bandits in a cave. Men are not loyal because they are not thankful, and they are not thankful because they are not thoughtful. The bitter sting of ingratitude lies, as Shakspere said, in the fact that it is so ruthless, so visible and open:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
  As Man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen;
Because thou art not seen,
  Although thy breath is rude.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky!
Thou dost not bite so nigh
  As benefits forgot!
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
  As friend remembered not.

Who is the great Friend remembered not of men, rejected now as of old, and crucified afresh? How pitiful the flimsy screen of prejudices and alleged intellectual difficulties with which we shut ourselves off from the impact of his spirit and his truth, and deny his demands which we know, in our utmost heart, are imperative and benign! If we make a winter for him, think of the bleak and bitter winter we make for ourselves when we deny him! All he can do with such a determined attitude of indifference or antagonism is to let it alone; and that makes our winter. Life, to be sure, may be so contrived as to rid itself of spiritual mipressions and reminders. By dint of sophistry, or cheap criticism, or excitement, men may adjust themselves so cleverly as to ignore the great poignant issues, or elude any impact of the higher, larger life which once, it may be, touched them to tears. They may even congratulate themselves upon their newly acquired freedom from "the hauntings of Providence" and the visitations of the Eternal. It is a fatal freedom, for loss of spiritual sensitiveness is a token of death—and it is winter!

In one of his most searching poems, the "Epilogue," Browning describes three stages in the development of the religious life, under the form that three speakers express their feeling. The first speaker, as David, utters the deep, heart-filling joy of the faith of a youth in a religious home. To one who has felt and loved the faith of his mother those lines bring a thrill of exaltation, as the memory comes back of times in the old country meeting-house when the presence of God seemed very

near and very real. For David the center of that faith was, of course, the temple, with its symbols, its ritual, and its music which he loved. Thus he sings, as Isaiah might have sung:

> Then the Temple filled with a cloud,
> Even the House of the Lord;
> Porch bent and pillar bowed:
> For the presence of the Lord,
> In the glory of his cloud,
> Had filled the House of the Lord.

The second speaker, as Renan, stands for the destructive moment, the critical doubting, questioning mood, such as comes to every man who thinks—as when a young tree is transplanted from the nursery to the orchard, and wilts for a time. Albeit, Renan stands content, like so many men to-day, fully satisfied that he has now reached the clear and perfect truth, and there is nothing to look forward to. He has buried his dead God, and calmly expresses his sentimental regret for the loss of some charming emotions which the dead religion could once evoke. The Face which David saw has faded. He seems glad to be rid of it, rejoicing that he has freed himself from what he calls mist and cloud and metaphor and miracle. Not thus did Romanes feel when his faith was in eclipse. He was forlorn. He was lonely. Life seemed to have lost its reason for being and its soul of loveliness. Philosophy became a meditation on death. But with Renan, in whom immeasurable vanity joined with subtle self-worship, it is different.

He feels himself standing on a lofty pinnacle of thought, above the clouds, where the divine idea is dethroned and he himself must fill the void and wear the crown! Yet even that facile and engaging egotist is touched, at times, with a certain loneliness, as if he were not equal to the task.

Now, some of us know all about the period of criticism and doubt in respect of the issues of faith. Every inch of the path is familiar, and we could make a map of it. And we also know that it is winter! When the winter first arrives, after the long hot summer and the dreamy days of autumn, it brings a crisp, sparkling air of freedom and gladness. But the prospect of perpetual winter is dismal and disheartening! Surely we are not doomed to live the rest of our days amid the arctic ice and snow! No, there is a way out of the chill winter into the great summer of a larger, freer, more fruitful faith—this some of us also know as we know nothing else! To-day there are multitudes of men—many here in our city—who are walking a wintry way of doubt, denial, and disillusionment. There is a mood of revolt in which the wild guess of an obscure critic has more weight than all the authentic scholarship of the world. But it is only a mood, and he is unwise who mistakes it for a true reading of reality. Let me beseech any who may hear my words not to stop and rest content in the winter climate of negation, but dare to see the matter through to the end!

The third speaker in the Browning poem has no name. It is the poet himself. He has gone through the

first and second stages of thought, but he has not come to a standstill, like Renan. He has perceived that the relation of earth to heaven, of man to God, is real and must be thought out, lived out. He has seen the dead come to life, for he has "watched when nature by degrees grows alive around him" in the wonder of spring. To him there is nothing dead in the world; there is only life and love and truth! What though old forms of faith have vanished, the old eternal faith has become real and vivid and victorious to him again. What if its ceremonies and symbols have lost their meaning, the reality is more wonderful than the symbol! And out of it all, as some of us can testify, there rises clear and sure and unutterably lovely, the reality of the living Christ.

> That one Face, far from vanishing, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows.

## UNKNOWN WORDS OF JESUS

My words shall not pass away.

*Matthew* 24: 35.

OFTEN it has been said that if we had only the words of Jesus, without the facts of his life, they would convey to us a sense of his uniqueness and reality. Of a truth, "never man spake like this man," and though ages have come and gone, something of the Speaker clings to his words, giving to them a peculiar luster and power. That is ever the mark of personality. He himself said that though heaven and earth should pass away, his words would abide. And if ever truth be stranger than fiction, it is in the fulfilment of that saying.

No other words spoken on earth have had such a history; no other words carry such cargoes of wonder. They are like birds let loose from a region above us, just out of our reach, of which we are dimly aware, and toward which both faith and wisdom point. They appeal to some identity within us half forgotten but vaguely remembered. They operate upon something below the surface of our lives. Their influence rises and grows of itself and builds itself into a temple within men. They speak in answer to a deep cry of the soul, they quench an intolerable fear; they make this world, even at its darkest, something of a home. They bind up

something within us which must not lie broken too long, lest life turn bitter. God made us to need such words, and now that they have been spoken, it is as if the Silence round about us had found a Voice, singing like music in the hearts of men.

How did Jesus learn such words, and by what authority did he speak? He himself tells us: "The words that I speak are not mine, but the Father's that sent me." He learned his words from God, telling in the day what God told him in the night. How did Jesus know that we need such words? By his own experience; he knew that man cannot live by bread alone. As he went through our life he felt the need of such words himself—the need of God. When he said to the men of his day, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," he spoke out of the depth of his own heart—out of vivid memories of many hours when he himself had sunk wearily into the Everlasting Arms. Each word of his was wrung out of the eternal silence to save us from some terror of mind, and to sweeten the cup of life. He spoke what he knew; he had the words of Eternal Life.

As a night-wind passing over meadows brings us the sweet breath of trees and flowers, which we have not seen, so the words of Jesus come laden with the air and perfume of things unseen but near-by. They wear the ultimate grace of simplicity, and yet they have always a sudden glow of surprise, as of a new revelation. Like his acts, they go beyond the bounds of duty, law, or custom, unveiling in a brief brightness new

vistas of truth. No one could have predicted either his words or his acts when the woman was brought to him, accused of great sin. So his words, in what place soever we find them, seem to bring us into the very presence of him who uttered them.

Not all the words of the Master are found in the Bible, much less in the Gospels. There is, for example, the saying quoted by St. Paul: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Other sayings of a like beauty are scattered here and there in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, and still others in far-away, unexpected places. For you must know that the life of Christ inspired a vast literature, including perhaps forty gospels. If only four Gospels have survived as authentic, it was not by fiat or decree, but by the same laws by which all classics live—because of their depth of insight and their matchless beauty of art. Let me bring together a few of the little known words of Jesus, asking you to behold their beauty and listen to their truth.

First of all, there is the saying quoted by Clement of Alexandria in his *Homilies*: "It was not of grudgingness that our Lord gave the charge in a certain Gospel: My mystery is for me and the sons of my house." That is in accord with the wisdom and method of the Master and of his great disciple, St. Paul. In answer to the question why he taught in parables, Jesus explained the peril of giving truth to men before they were worthy or ready to receive it. Nature holds back her secrets until man is fit to be intrusted with them. Truth is power,

and when it is abused, or held by untrue hands, it may become a scourge. One thinks at once of the Mystery cults so widespread in the time of Jesus, whose hidden lore was known only to the initiated. Whether St. Paul belonged to any one of them we do not know, but his letters are colored by imagery suggested by them. Again and again he speaks of the Gospel as a mystery whose secret and saving truth must be won.

Are there, then, two Christianities, one for the many and one for the few? Our democratic age, which seeks to impose its ideals even upon the Kingdom of Heaven, will not have it so. Nor need we affirm it. None the less, there is a higher Christianity which few attain, because so few seek it. Everything must not be told to everybody. Jesus had his "little flock" to whom he confided much which he kept from the world, or else taught it in parables cryptic and veiled. St. Paul felt that it was not lawful for him to tell all that had been shown him, and he pressed forward, forgetting the past, if so that he might know more. Let no one think that he has fathomed the mystery of Christ. There are depths below depths, heights beyond heights, yet unexplored. Nor can we know it save in so far as our experience gives us key after key wherewith to unlock it. "Tell us plainly," pleaded one of his disciples. He did tell them plainly, but how little they understood, not having eyes to see.

Another saying of Jesus, so simple and deep that its meaning may be overlooked, comes to us through Matthias. While the disciples were waiting in the Upper Room for the coming of Pentecost, they grew impatient

and proceeded to elect an apostle to fill the place of Judas the traitor. They cast lots, and Matthias was chosen. He was a good and useful man, having been one of the seventy sent out by the Master to proclaim the advent of the kingdom. But God had other plans, and in due time St. Paul was divinely chosen to the apostolate. Matthias, however, wrote a book called *The Traditions,* in which he recorded a saying of Jesus which that gracious scholar, Clement of Alexandria, has preserved: "Wonder at the things before you."

At first this saying does not yield its simple meaning, but if we look a second time it is there and we wonder why we did not see it. Clement places it alongside the saying of Plato, that wonder is the first step toward the knowledge that lies behind. For instance, the displacement of water when a body is plunged into it is a familiar fact, but ages passed before men saw what it meant. Archimedes noticed it one day as he entered his bath, and wondered at it. His wonder led to the discovery of the law of specific gravity. Apples had been falling since the time of Adam, until Sir Isaac Newton, in his garden at Woolsthorpe, wondered why an apple falls at all—with what result we know. Just so it is in the things of the spirit. When Jesus talked with Nicodemus he stated his teachings in a way to excite wonder. "How can these things be?" said the puzzled Nicodemus, who had forgotten that we live in a world of wonders:

> The mystic heaven and earth within,
> Plain as the sea and sky.

When a man has ceased to wonder he has ceased to learn. All art is an effort to keep alive in us a sense of the wonder and awe of life. Nothing is commonplace or unclean. Wonder at the things before you, for wonder is the beginning of wisdom and of worship.

An oft-quoted saying of Jesus—quoted by Jerome, Origen and many others—is surely pertinent just now: "Show yourselves approved bankers." Little do we realize the uncertainty of life and property in the olden time. Nothing was safe. If a man left his money at home, it was in danger of war, invasion, or theft; if he took it with him, he was beset by pirates at sea and brigands by land. Naturally he buried it. Even then a lucky finder might get it, or the man might not come back and it was lost. Digging for lost treasure was a trade. Hence the saying, "Leaving no stone unturned," which has come down to us. From this uncertainty about property the Master drew his parable of the "treasure hidden in the fields." But if a man hid his money, it lay idle and did not increase.

No wonder the banker had a high place in the ancient world. Two things were required of him—integrity, and skill in detecting counterfeits; and it is to these two qualities that the saying of Jesus refers. He wished his followers to be honest of soul and keen in the discernment of truth. Jesus had much to say about money, whose perils he feared more than the perils of poverty. Most of his parables deal with it in one way or another. His parable of the Talents makes all of us bankers, holding the rich deposit of life, which we must put to

good use; not simply to keep it safe, but increase it. He was ever urging men to lay up treasures in heaven, where no thief can break through and steal. Thus he would have us be approved bankers—able to know the truth by the ring of it, busy in the enrichment of our souls, and, above all, thrifty of heart as against the day of trial and need.

One of the most beautiful of these sayings of Jesus had to do with his debate about the Sabbath. Now, the Sabbath was meant to be a beneficent joy, not a rigid horror. But the Hebrew lawyers had woven about it such a network of rules and restrictions that it was a day to dread. When Jesus brushed these cobwebs aside and lived as a free soul, they were horrified. Moreover, when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," they held him guilty of blasphemy. They thought the heavens would surely fall and the whole social fabric tumble to ruin. No doubt they made predictions to that effect. Every teacher is held to account for the results of his teaching; and when some of those who heard Jesus talk of the Sabbath felt a new freedom, perhaps they abused it. Of course, the critics of the Master would be free to say: "See what your words lead to! Your teaching is anarchy." Hence this scene and these words found in the Codex Bezæ:

> On the same day He beheld one at work on the Sabbath, and said to him, Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, thou art accursed and a transgressor of the Law.

Evidently the Master felt that the man was on his side, but he was not certain as to his motive; for there is such a thing as acting rightly from a wrong motive. Therefore, the delicate chivalry of the Master. He neither approved the conduct of the man nor condemned it. If, with a clear sense of the isues involved, he had gone to work as a protest against tyranny, it was well. But it might well be that he was a worldling, greedy of gain, who grasped at the license which the new freedom of the Master seemed to justify. It was as if the Master had said: "Since you are on my side, will you not give me your heart too?"

St. Justin, the apologist and martyr of the early church, came to faith by a devious path. Though born at Sychon in the Holy Land, he was neither a Hebrew nor a Christian. Nevertheless, he was a seeker after God, craving intellectual satisfaction. He went to the Stoics, but found no help in their teaching. Thence to the Sophists, but they haggled about fees and he left. He tried the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, but found not what he sought. At last he came to Ephesus, where he met an humble saint who led him to faith in Christ. In his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, in defense of the faith, he quotes a saying of Jesus, which may well be an echo of the preaching of St. John who lived at Ephesus. It runs thus: "In whatsoever employments I may surprise you, in these also I will judge you."

Clearly it is a reference to the second coming of the Master, which was the rallying hope of the infant

church. Watch, said the Teacher, for in an hour when you think not the Son of Man cometh, even as a thief in the night. It is in his unguarded moments that the real character of a man is revealed. As St. Francis of Sales sat one evening in the light of the setting sun, a child nestled by his side with a little chess-board, and the saint played with him. An austere brother espied him, and took him to task:

"For shame, Brother Francis, that you should engage in a foolish game with a foolish child! What if it were told you that the Lord will presently appear?"

"Brother," said the saint, "I would finish the game. It was for his glory that I began it!"

That is, whatever we do we may well do it as if it were the last act of our lives. And, indeed, it may be, for death is never far away. Burnett said of Archbishop Leighton that he had known him for twenty years, and all that time he had never heard him say anything which he would not have wished to be his last word or act. What a strange beauty in the life of Stevenson, who lived every day in the presence of death. So do we all; and, though the coming of Jesus in the clouds may be delayed, he comes to each of us in the hour of death. And in whatsoever employment he may surprise us, by that he will judge us.

One hundred and sixty miles south of Cairo are the ruins of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, or Piketown, the seat of an old cult of animal worship. In the process of excavation the explorers came upon the rubbish depot of the city, where they found many papyrus leaves,

waste-paper sweepings from homes, shops, and offices, preserved in the sand in a rainless climate. Private letters, invitations to dinners and weddings, wills, marriage contracts, deeds, leases, law-court speeches, police warrants, census papers, school-boy essays, and, among them all, a part of a lost Gospel and a beautiful saying of Jesus, dating, apparently, from the second century.

Jesus saith: Wheresoever they may be, they are not without God; and where there is one alone, even thus am I with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and I am there.

What a saying for the lonely workers of the world! Some think it too philosophic, if not pantheistic. Not so. It tells of the everywhereness of that eternal sympathy which took human form in him who worked as a carpenter in Nazareth. Where two or three meet together in his name, he is there. Aye, where one walks alone to his toil in the woods or quarry, he is not alone, for the unseen Love is with him. When he turns a stone in hard labor or in quest of lost treasure, he will find a pearl of greater value. If he cleave the wood, truth is there also. Not only in the communion of the saints is the everlasting mercy to be found, but everywhere; for, as one of our own poets has said,

> In the mud and scum of things
> Something always, always sings.

Alas, one can only quote this deep saying and pass on; pass, this time, from Egypt to India. In a journey up

the Ganges, Alexander Duff visited the old city of Futchpur-Sikri, where stands one of the largest mosques in the world. On the right as he entered, he observed an Arabic inscription in large characters. To his amazement it proved to be a saying of Jesus, which, rendered into English, reads thus: "Jesus has said: The world is merely a bridge, ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwelling on it." How these deep words journeyed so far and when, no one knows. Perhaps Thomas and Bartholomew, who are said to have gone to India and preached the Gospel, may have carried this saying as a precious seed. No one knows. It is not strange that it should be found over a mosque of Islam, for the Koran holds Jesus to be a prophet, and three of its chapters deal with his teachings.

Not only so, but Sikri was the home of Akbar, the famous emperor of Hindustan who astonished the sixteenth century by the catholicity of his faith—excelling even Severus, emperor of Rome, who placed images of Abraham and Christ side by side with Orpheus in his domestic pantheon. Of Akbar Tennyson has written in a poem of noble beauty. However it may have been, Akbar placed this saying of Jesus over the mosque, as Severus inscribed the Golden Rule over the gateway of his palace. True, a bridge was unknown in the Holy Land, but Jesus, when he went to Tyre, where his name had gone before him, may have seen the great mole connecting the city with the mainland. How natural for him to say to the men of that proud city that the world is merely a bridge; for to him the world was an infinite

parable of unseen reality, each fact a window opening into the Eternal.

What a word is this! Aye, the world is only a bridge between two eternities, and he is unwise who forgets that fact. Pilgrims we are, having here no abiding city. Where Tyre once stood so proudly the fishermen sun their nets. We, too, shall fall into dust, and our temples and towers shall melt like an unsubstantial vision of the night. Wonder at the things before you. Show yourself an approved banker, laying up truth that cannot rust. Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, thou art blessed. Live to-day as you would live if it were the last day of your fleeting mortal life. Seek God always, everywhere, in the house of prayer and in the places of toil. For the world is a bridge, and we must pass on into the hidden mystery which he keeps for himself and the sons of his house not made with hands.

## WHAT IS A RELIGIOUS MAN ?

To be spiritually minded is life.

*Romans* 8:6.

Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee.

Saint Augustine.

Shoemaker Hankin spent his breath in proving that God doesn't exist, and his life in proving that He does.

*Mad Shepherds*, L. P. Jacks.

One has many thoughts in the midst of the ugly debates in the churches, in which good men bandy bitter words and brand each other as enemies of faith. Often they recall the saying of Penn, that men who fight about religion have no religion to fight about; but that is going too far. By the very fact that religion is so decisive, and touches life so deeply, men who take it seriously will quickly flame into passion. For the same reason we must watch our words and submit our lips to a wise care, lest we injure what is holy to all.

### § 1

After all, what is a religious man? It all depends, of course, on what we mean by religion, and here our

thought is vague. Inevitably so, because every great thing opens out upon the Infinite and asks for unfenced frontiers. A definition is a wall we build around a reality in order to bring it within reach, and a wall has its limits; it shuts out more than it shuts in. A man may fence in a field, but never the winds that blow across it, nor the sunlight that falls upon it, without which his field would be of little worth. No more can we fence in religion with a definition; it eludes our words and escapes.

Clearly a line must be drawn between religion and theology. One is the truth of life in its warmth and radiance, its joy and pathos; the other is a system of reasonings and conjectures, symbols and traditions, by which man seeks to justify, clarify, and interpret the faith by which he lives. Religion is poetry; theology is prose. It is the difference between a flower garden and a book of botany, a manual of astronomy and a sky full of stars. As one does not have to know the facts of botany in order to enjoy a bed of violets, so one need not be an adept in the mysteries of dogma in order to live the religious life. Men lived by the grace of religion ages before theology was born, or ever logic had learned its letters. Our theories of religion may be, must be, imperfect, and ought to be as revisable as are all the ideas of the human mind; but the wonder of the reality remains, a challenge and a consolation.

Our theology should be new in every generation, as the mind of man broadens with the processes of the suns. In point of fact it has been so. Each age shows a chang-

ing church that professes to remain unchanged, and denounces those who change it. Ever the truth abides and grows—abides because it grows—and it is seen by each age in a new light, in a new setting against a new background. The pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers warned his flock, at parting with them, not to come to a period in religion, but to expect further light to break forth. Still further light is breaking forth in our time: new ideas of the world and its laws, new visions of the spiritual order and its ideals, are at the door—if we have eyes to see and a heart for high adventure.

In the same way temples, altars, creeds, feasts, fasts, and solemn ritual words are not religion. They are efforts to realize and express the unseen element of thought and yearning which lies at the root of it; attempts to utter in symbol, or to invoke by sacrament, the mystery and the meaning of life. Religion is no abstract thing; it is life itself—"the life of God in the soul of man," as Scrougall said three centuries gone by. It is the living truth by which we live, the art by which we learn how to live—how to be, how to do, how to do without, how, as Dante said, to make our lives eternal.

The spiritual quality in humanity, by whatever name it may be described, is a part of our endowment, at once the fountain of our faith and the consecration of our life. It is the Eternal Mysticism, to express which some write rituals, others devise dogmas, and others sing anthems. Elusive, yet ineluctable, it takes myriad shapes, adding a radiance and a pathos to all the old, sweet, sad, happy human things: love and birth, joy and

woe, pity and pain and death, the quest of truth and the love of beauty, the day of drudgery and the hour of divine surprise, the laughter and the liturgy of life. It is the grace and finer spirit of noble art, great music, and lofty literature, no less than of the piety of the race from the crude rites of early man to the life of Jesus.

Every man shares, in some degree, in the great mysticism of the race. By the very fact of his humanity, each man has a capacity for religion, as he has a need of it, whether he knows it or not; just as he is potentially a poet, though he may not be aware of it. One doubts the fact of an entirely irreligious person; but if he exists he is by so much less than human. In some men the spark is dim or dormant, but it is there, along with much else. As radium is found only in uranium, and then only a few grains of it in tons of alien matter, so "the light which lighteth every man" may burn darkly; but it does not go out. Older than all creeds, deeper than all doubts, it is the account which life gives of itself when it is healthy and free. As deep as life itself, as various as the need and nature of man, it adds a luster to his days and years, a ray of white light hidden in his clay.

So the religious man is of many sorts, according to type, temper, and stage of growth, and we ought to be able to know him in any garb. Rough, hard men have a shy, latent need of the Divine, but do not know how to say so. Women of the world, who seem to live only for fashion, are weary and ill at ease in the midst of frivolity, and a laugh often stifles a cry of the soul.

Many who are reckoned as skeptics, and deem themselves such, long for a truth that makes all other truth true. In some, religion is a tradition, in others a superstition, in others a grim sense of duty, in others only a wisp of wistfulnesses. There are those who are unaware of its existence in their lives, and even deny that they possess it, thinking it means plate-passing and long prayers. Yet they "live by a faith that lips deny; God knoweth why." Whatever its form, it is deep, tender, holy, a temper of mind, a tone of heart, a haunting rhythm in the life of man.

Since religion is a Divine Life, it can no more be shut up in a creed or a rite than spring can be shut up in a garden; it takes all the shapes that truth and love and duty take. The greatest of all teachers did not use the word "religion" at all, but always the word "life" instead, saying that he had come that men might have life more abundantly. With Jesus religion does not consist in a few acts of worship and alms, much less in a set of dogmas; it is not one thing, but the spirit in which we do everything, if it be only to give a cup of cold water. Many kinds of life must be lived, and no one kind has right to be called religious, to the exclusion of others. Every task is sacred, the humblest no less than the highest, which makes for growth and service; and all things are holy which draw men into fellowship and promote justice and beauty in the earth. So far from limiting life, religion sanctifies it, sets it free, shakes the poison out of all its wild flowers, and reveals the eternal values in the arts and acts of each day.

## § 2

It may be said that, in the view here set forth, if religion is everything, it ceases to be anything. Or else if all thoughts, all feelings, all acts are, or may be, religious, it embraces what is included under morality, and we are using more words than we need. Of course, for the purposes of analysis we may isolate one aspect of life, separating religion from morality, but in actual experience they blend, they intermingle, they are interwoven. Life is one; personality is one. Indeed, my point is that religion, as the Latin word implies, is the unifying spirit of all life. One thought runs through it, whether defined by Cicero to "rethink" or by Augustine to "rebind": the idea of a tie by which things are held together, a thread on which things are strung: a power of cohesion and coherence.

More and more religion is regarded, not as a separate faculty or interest or instinct, but rather as a unity of interests, the organizing spirit among the values of life. A picturesque example may be found in the life of Anton Chekhov, the Russian novelist, to whose art we owe so much. Something happened to him, whether real or imaginary, to cut the tie which gives unity and continuity to life, scattering ideas and events like beads in disarray when the thread is broken. It was an appalling experience, as he describes it, leaving him a sad, weary, bewildered man, wondering "whether life, of which we know nothing, is worth the tormenting reflections with

which our Russian minds wear themselves out." In one of his letters he writes:

> In all the thoughts, feelings, and ideas which I form about anything, there is wanting the something universal which would bind all these together into one whole. Each feeling and thought lives detached in me; and in all my opinions and in all the little pictures which my imagination paints not even the most cunning analyst will discover what is called the general idea, or the God of the living man. If this is not there, then nothing is there.

No wonder he is utterly alone, like a tiny island in a vast sea. Each man stands by himself; fraternity is impossible. Things are not related; they happen haphazard. Facts pile up pell-mell, without sequence or significance. He knows what Lange called "the comfortless conglomerate of finite events." He sees clearly; he etches vividly; he can fix a fleeting impression in a flashing phrase. But life has no plan, no purpose, no meaning; it is just a jumble. Ideas are deceptive; ideals, as in the *Black Monk,* are a mirage; work is unmeaning monotony; each day is an idle tale ending in ennui, futility, and the fatigue of despair. So dismal does life become when the mystic tie is cut. What a fate to be marooned on a desert island in a world where there is truth to seek, love to win, evil to fight, and beauty passes with the sun on her wings!

Such a man is sick; something has hit him and he goes lame. Yet his experience, if it be only imaginary, does show us that the basis of life and the secret of

sanity is a sense, vague or vivid, of the "something universal" which unites things into a whole. As Bruno said, God is the principle of connection in things, and things are connected by the Meaning to which all their partial meanings contribute. Nature and events, as Goethe held, are the language of God, silent and incessant, of which we may read here a word and there a stanza. They are facts, but they are also symbols, and have meaning beyond the facts. That is to say, everything is somehow the voice of God, if we have ears to hear and hearts to understand. To find meaning in the world is to begin to live in it and to love it, and where love is, there God is.

By a religious man we mean one who is aware, dimly or clearly, that his life is one with a vast Kindred-Life, in whose near-neighborliness and far-friendliness he and all men are united to fulfil their duty and destiny. It does not matter by what name, if any, he speaks of "the Nameless one of an hundred names"; he knows that he is neither an alien nor an exotic in the world, but a soul at home, albeit seeking a country. There is much in nature to appal, much in history to dismay, but by a wise sanity he trusts a hidden gentleness behind the hardness of life, a meaning in its mystery, a purpose in its pitiful fleeting beauty. If to-day the universe is vast beyond his dreams, he still rejoices with Emily Dickinson when she sang of the hospitality "of our old neighbor, God."

As has been said, it ought to be the joy of a religious man to recognize the precious thing called religion, in

what guise soever it may hide. In whatever degree of development or form of manifestation, it is a voice out of the heart of life, an undertone of melody by which we have hope that a medley of sound will yet become a great world-song. Our theories of it, about which we debate so hotly, may be of much or little worth; but the reality itself is of vital import in the life we live together and the life we live alone. Surely it is an error to draw hard and fast lines in a matter so intimate and inward, least of all to mar the comity of man, when, as Wesley saw, all partake, in some degree, of the common sacrament of the spiritual life in which each finds strength for to-day and hope for the morrow.

Often enough the man we call an atheist, and who regards himself so, is a deeply religious man, though he might deny it vehemently; he only rejects our idea of God, which may be equally far from the truth. By the same sign, a reverent agnostic may be more truly spiritual in his thought than an eloquent cleric. Many a man goes to church, as the thing to do, and repeats the creed in every iota, while God is not even real enough to him to be doubted. His mind is absorbed in Steel Common or the score of the game. The oft-quoted lines of Tennyson are true; there is more faith in honest doubt than in a casual conformity to a conventional creed. At least, a man who has only a stoic resignation to an inner decency is no less religious than a pietist who talks of God as if he were a man in the next room.

One thinks of Peter Cartwright, who in a political campaign denounced Lincoln as an infidel. The two

men stand before us fully revealed, one a fiery evangelist dealing damnation round the land, the other a grave, kindly man, honestly unable to accept the crude theology of his day, whose faith in his early years, so far as it was explicit, took the form of a moral fatalism in which miracle and prayer had no place. Yet surely, if ever of any one, we may say that the soul of religion was in Lincoln—"a kind of poetry," his wife put it—despite his doubts and a melancholy which made the sky as gray as a tired face. In later life, under the burden of woe unspeakable, he was driven to his knees because, as he said, he had nowhere else to go. It is a part of the surprise and grandeur of his life that, with his early skepticism and his growing cosmic piety, he should be accounted one of the most Christlike men of his age.

Such facts suggest the need of a clearer eye for the realities of religion, and less worship of mere words; more insight, more understanding, more toleration. The life of the spirit is holy whatever shape it may take, alike in the hushed awe of the agnostic and in the lives of the saints, in new cults of groping souls and in old and lovely liturgies. Only it may be rather thin betimes, and one needs to be on guard against unrealities of all sorts, especially in our day of "lost allegiances," so to name it, when we are in danger of a new kind of cant, not in the church, but outside among a host of folk who tell us that love is God, and work is worship, and the green fields are a temple, as indeed they are; though lip-service is no better out of doors than in. As

some one has said, a lot of paper money is being circulated in the form of fine phrases with little bullion behind it.

One may have a deal of sympathy with men in their feeling in respect of the church and its dogma, in view of the angry agitations of the hour; but the feeling may go too far. Tolstoy told Gorky that many fail of faith from shyness. More fail for lack of loyalty, effort, discipline, by which we keep spiritually fit, putting habit on the side of the inner life. The neglect of social worship is the more amazing in our day, remembering its appalling spiritual loneliness. It may be said that if men want God they will find Him, now as always; but to ignore the law of fellowship by which we learn together what none may know alone is to make the quest harder. It is not wise to forget those forms and symbols and old and sweet customs in which are enshrined the wisdom and faith of the past, and lose thereby the mystic continuity of inheritance in the deepest things of life.

## § 3

Still the wonder remains how so many sincere people do keep religion and everyday life in separate compartments. The explanation, no doubt, lies in the way in which they have been brought up to think in regard to such matters. Much of what is called religion, as usually interpreted, conveys nothing real or helpful to the average man; it contains little to link on to life as he knows it. Its outlook is remote, its imagery alien. Its ideas and

insights need to be restated in the terms of our time, in plain everyday speech, so that men can understand it, lay hold of it, and attempt to live up to it. No idea of religion is worth anything that does not have a vital effect on character, in which the eternal values are revealed and attested.

Much of our teaching has gone awry, chiefly in the stress it has laid on belief rather than on life. According to Jesus, with whom our best instincts agree, our religion does not consist in what we believe, but in what we see, what we do, what we are. One does not forget that life is profoundly influenced by belief, as belief, in turn, is clarified and confirmed by life—matter itself for an essay or a sermon. Yet a man may believe all the creeds and have little moral worth or spiritual loveliness; he may believe in the resurrection of the body and be dead of soul. As Carlyle said, the religion of a man is not the creed he professes; not that necessarily, often not that at all, since men of all degrees of worth and worthlessness sign all kinds of creeds. His religion is his life, what he acts upon and knows of the meaning of life and his duty in it.

In the meantime, we want finally to get rid of the idea that a bad man who believes a creed is more religious than a good man who does not. As Jesus put it, the sheep and the goats are not believers and unbelievers, but the unselfish and the selfish; those who serve God better than they know, and those who profess but do not. It is not a plan by which we escape hell and get into heaven, but a life of fellowship and ministrant

good-will, uniting us with the stream of goodness that was in the world before we came, and will still be flowing when we are gone. As a rule the best men are not those who are most sure of their salvation, or think most about it. They are those who, while aware of their own failings and limitations, do not indulge in morbid reflections on their own spiritual state, but put their power into a life of love guided by truth. Many a man who has only a hazy idea of what it means to love God is really doing it all the time, in the most real way, by helping his fellows along the road.

If such words seem to be trite, they are none the less true, truer by far than many a dogma; and it is by such things that we learn that religion is not a thing apart from life, but life itself at its best—a tie uniting us with "the Love that moves the sun and all the stars," with our fellows in fraternal righteousness, and with ourselves in an inner unity and order. As Conrad said of art, it is one with our capacity for joy and wonder, our feeling of mystery surrounding our lives, our sense of duty and pity and pain, our latent kinship with all creation; the subtle but invincible sense of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts—a fellowship in dreams, in joy, in tragedy, in aspiration, in fear, in faith, in hope—binding the dead to the living and the living to those yet unborn.

## THE ABUNDANT LIFE

I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

*John* 10: 10.

THERE are some texts whose very words bring back the faces of noble men and women who have translated them into life, and this text is one of them. It recalls the gracious figure of Phillips Brooks as he used to stand by the great pillar in Trinity Church in Boston pouring out a torrent of eloquence. During the week I have been preaching in his old church, his memorials all about me—the bust in the baptistry, visible from the pulpit, at once an inspiration and a challenge. It was an extraordinary experience, as if the preacher were not simply a tradition but a presence in his church and his city.

Every preacher has a key-truth, some aspect of the Gospel nearer to his heart and more vivid in his experience than any other; his own vine and fig-tree where he is at home. It was so with Phillips Brooks. He was wont to say that no matter what text he took, he had always one theme for his sermon, the Abundant Life. Of course, he varied his message with every art of emphasis, but he fulfilled in his ministry the ideal of Amiel when he said that to be religious is "to personify and

embody the eternal." He was a symbolic figure, and his life was a perpetual disclosure of a beautiful soul, supreme both as preacher and pastor.

One day in New York he took for his text the words, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." Everybody expected a sermon on death or the end of the world, or at least on the coming of Christ. Instead the title of his sermon was "The Inexhaustible Interest of Life!" With every variety of emphasis and appeal he showed that life without uncertainty, expectancy, and unpredictable surprise would be deadly, flat, stale, and unprofitable. Watch, therefore; live in a spirit of eager aspiration, for no one knows what a day will bring forth. It was so again when he talked of the scene of Jesus walking on the water, and Peter said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water. And he said, "Come." The sermon had to do with the great Adventure of Life. To him the religious life was a normal human life, full-orbed, radiant, and aglow with zest and glee. Such was his central insight, and his character lighted up like an altar lamp the teaching of his words. Whether in the careless freedom of the street, in the warm circle of friendship, or on his throne in the pulpit, he lived the abundant life.

Herein the noble preacher was like his Master whose he was and whom he served with such loyalty of rejoicing obedience. Surely it is significant that Jesus never once used the word "religion," but always the word "life" instead, for to Him "religion and life are one

thing, or neither is anything." As William Blake said, he was "the Bright Preacher of Life." If one were asked to sum up his Gospel in one word, that word would be Life. Here lies the deep difference between Jesus and Buddha, to whom life was an ill, if not an evil, and whose ultimate beatitude was the hope of extinction. But Jesus came not to denude life and strip it bare of beauty but to make it rich and deep, not only radiant but radiating. Truly the very fact that he spoke thus of life shows that life must be good, for if ever any one had a right to be a pessimist it was he. Baffled on every hand, despised and rejected of men, without money, without home, beset by the trickery of his foes and the treachery of friends, and always upon his sunniest hour a shadow of the cross, none the less he taught the glory of life. What a rebuke to the pessimism by which we are tempted in the dark hour or the passive mood!

By contrast with the radiance of his own life, the aspect of humanity which seemed most to impress the Master was its weariness, its lack of joyousness, its slow and heavy-laden step. He was not surprised at what men suffered, but at what they missed. Hence his mission as a bringer of a more free and vivid kind of life, rich, abundant, eternal. No description of him is more arresting than the words of the Evangelist, "In Him was life"—a very intense, palpitating word, glowing, sparkling. He had, first of all, an abounding physical life, diffusing health from the very hems of his robe, and there is no hint that he was ever ill for an hour. He had,

also, a vivid personality, as commanding as it was winsome, overawing the soldiers sent to arrest him, yet winning the love of little children. His mental life was deep beyond our fathoming. He saw clearly; he spoke as never man spake. His ideas, considered in their sweep and forereaching grasp, dazzle us with their depth, and betray an insight as true as a line of light. His moral life was no passive, pallid kind of innocence, but positive and profound; not only pure, but purifying. His religious experience, in its depth, its richness, its fullness, was a revelation which no words may tell. Alive in the truest, most effective and enjoyable ways, truly could he say that he had come that men might have a new and deeper kind of life.

What is all the world seeking to-day with such persistent, passionate quest? Life! More life, richer life—to see life, to know life, to possess life. The moving-picture show, lords it over the art gallery because in the theater the pictures seem to have life—they move. Everywhere it is the same. We judge an artist or an author by one test, whether he is, or is not, "in contact with life." In philosophy we are face to face with a movement of thought, hardly yet a system, which goes by the name of Vitalism. Its chief exponents teach us to regard the universe as an expression of life, instead of regarding life as a by-product, so to speak, of the universe. Yet with all our seeking after life, do we really find it? What multitudes go through the world not more than half alive, dwarfed, stunted, unresponsive. Too many are like the serfs in the Gogol story of *Dead Souls*,

who were reckoned as being alive until the next census. Most of us, indeed, live with a slower pulse-beat than is our right, making a living, as we say, but not living a life.

For Jesus meant something more by the word "life" than we mean by it, something far deeper. Outwardly a man may appear prosperous, while all the time his inward nature is a shriveled starveling, his affections withered, his faith decrepit, his sympathies sluggish—"a dead soul's epitaph in his face." Hence the parable of Jesus about a man who had so rich a harvest that his barns were bursting, and he decided to pull down his barns and build greater ones. When he had filled the big barns to the eaves, he said to his soul, "Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry"—and that night he died. God called him a "fool" for thinking that the life of a man consists in the abundance of the things that he possesses. Life is not made of things. It uses them. Food, clothes, shelter, we need, but only that we may live for the things that make it worth our time to live at all. Otherwise we are only passing the time, or wearing out shoe-leather. What folly, then, to make incidentals the prime objects of life, the more so when our tenure of them is so short and insecure. Jesus measured life not by quantity but by quality.

Equally futile is it to seek life with a fretful, feverish anxiety. Jesus saw all this fret and fuss of folk about what to eat, how to dress, and pointed to the lily whose beauty is untroubled by care. What did he mean? The lily does not toil, yet it is not idle. It does the thing it

was meant to do. It lives out the law of its life, fulfils its reason for being. Just so man must live out the law of his life, seeking the Kingdom of Heaven as naturally as the lily seeks the light and air. Jesus held that the highest life is the only natural life. Marcus Aurelius lived a spiritual life in a palace. Simplicity is not a matter of things, but of spirit and an inner attitude toward things. Life becomes simpler when we seek first things first, and it was thus that Jesus bade us seek first the Kingdom of Heaven. Other things are necessary, but not primary. When we invert the true order of life, it becomes cluttered, complex, unintelligible, and loses its bounding joy.

Consider what is involved in being abundantly alive. Ruskin said that the outstanding, ennobling difference between one man and another, and the test whereby we may know who is alive and who only half live, is simply this—that one man feels more than the other. We are only human in so far as we are sensitive, responsive. Indifference, lack of sympathy, vulgarity, are so many kinds of death. The root distinction between a gentleman and a churl lies in the fact that a gentleman feels a stain like a wound, and the churl is callous and does not care. Bunyan was a tinker, so was Christopher Sly, but how world-far they were apart in their capacity for sympathy and sorrow. The poet who said that Jesus was the first true gentleman that ever breathed was true to the facts of his nature, and his capacity alike for indignation and compassion. Fineness of feeling exposes one both to sorrow and joy, but one cannot have one

without the other. It is in the blunt hand, the cold heart, the stolid habit, that men become dead of soul. Jesus came to quicken our pulses, to pour a new tide of pity into our hearts, to make men more intensely and vividly alive.

Many are the forms in which this more vivid, sensitive, and abounding life may be fostered and developed, the greatest of all being a contact with the living spirit of Christ. Such contact means the infusion of a vital health and purity and joy into a human life, whereof Phillips Brooks is one of a multitude of witnesses. The glory of his life, the secret of its wonder and beauty, the source of its victorious and rejoicing service, was the fact that Christ lived in him richly—as Saint-Gaudens felt but did not interpret aright. Those who knew him recall the majestic figure, the massive head, the great and beautiful eyes that were "homes of silent prayer," the tender strength, the prevailing sympathy, and the ineffable grace of that unforgettable man. There was about him a kind of divine passion, a human endowment of surpassing richness touched and transfigured by the light of God. There was a hallowing presence in his heart, and therefore a hallowing power fell upon those who heard him in the dim recesses of Trinity Temple. High, fine, sweetly human, unspeakably lovely was the soul of Phillips Brooks because Christ lived in it. He lived the life of wide sympathies, of pure emotions, of great thoughts, or holy ambitions, of eager and aspiring service—the life which is its own pledge and prophecy of eternity.

We live, said Wordsworth in an imperishable line, by admiration, hope and love; and the abundant life admires more eagerly, hopes more persistently, and loves more ardently. They are dead who live not by their admirations but by their disgusts. The man most truly alive is he who is most keen to recognize and swift to greet whatsoever things are honest and just and of good report. If there be any virtue or any praise, he has eyes to see it and a voice of welcome. He is a hero-worshiper, an enthusiast for all generous causes and all noble adventures. In days when cynicism and the cant of cynicism are so much in vogue, he does not bow the knee to the Baal of a cheap and flippant scorn. No, he is dowered with the hate of hate, and scorn of scorn, and the love of love, and by his faith in the hidden nobility of men he evokes that nobility and brings it to bloom. Amid all the haunting temptations to pessimisms, he does not give way to the weakness of despair. Anybody can give up. Nothing is easier than to be a cynic. But the life of Christ shed abroad in our hearts keeps us buoyant and confident that in the end love shall triumph over selfishness and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Salvation has many aspects, but it is all told in the one deathless word, Love. For love it is that makes the most of life, thinks most deeply, feels most passionately, and serves most generously. It redeems us from selfishness—the sum of all sin—as well as from contempt and despair. It is true indeed that those who love most suffer most, as they have also most power to endure and

conquer sufferings; but all the saints have proved that the Cross can be a Tree of Life. Love feels keenly the fellowship of the common lot, rejoicing with them that weep—swept out of itself into the very life of God which is the redemption of the world. If now we look into the life of Christ, we find that he lived by admiration, hope, and love. How quick he was to welcome every yearning for a nobler life, every bud of promise, every glint of moral beauty. He never lost hope for humanity. His keen eye saw something to love even in the most forlorn and sin-bespattered mortal, and his love was a tide always flowing. Underneath his sorrow lay the mystic and unfathomable joy that comes of living richly, hoping unweariedly, and loving triumphantly.

Along this path we arrive at the true meaning of the Eternal Life. Immortality is one thing; eternal life is another. Christ did not come that we might have the gift of immortality. We have it whether we will or no; doomed to it, burdened by it, unable to escape it. No, Christ came that the awful fact of immortality might be heightened and brightened into the splendor of eternal life. He saw that men do not live, but only exist, measuring life by duration, not by depth and glow and color. With him the question was not how long a man may live but how much he lives. Some one has used this illustration. When a river is low and shallow in the summer-time, we see the rocks that rise in its bed. They obstruct the stream, and make it fret as it journeys to the sea. But when the river is in flood, the rocks are covered and forgotten in the silence of a mighty sweep

of happy waters moving in majesty. Measured by miles, the river is no longer than before. Measured by depth, how different it is!

Such is the abundant life—rich, sparkling, overflowing, unending! As Bergson said, life moves like a cavalry troop, overriding death. For one who lives this life Eternity is now, Heaven is here, and Death is only a cloud-shadow wandering across our human valley. There is no break in it. It is continuous, not something we are to get when we die, but something that never dies. Length of days does not signify, Depth of life is what counts, radiance of faith, richness of love, and the fellowship with him who redeems us from the tyranny of time. O Eternal Life, live in us abundantly lest we die without ever having lived, and teach us so to fill our days with the spirit of him who came that we might have life that we may live indeed—live faithfully, fruitfully, fearlessly in the fellowship of the life that shall endless be.

## THE MAKING OF A MYSTIC

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

*Job* 42: 5, 6.

So far as I am aware, no one has pointed out that the text is a confirmation, if not the fulfilment, of that other great cry wrung from the heart of Job, and which echoes across the ages: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though worms destroy the skin of my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." That is, instead of a dim hope to be realized in some far time beyond life and the grave, it was fulfilled in a deeper, clearer revelation in spiritual experience on earth.

How wonderful it was to read the Bible in the awful days of the World War, when the earth trembled with tragedy and sons before their fathers died. Itself a book of battle, written in the light of falling kingdoms and burning cities, we found in its pages a new and profound exegesis of the terrible teaching of events. No other book seemed equal to such a time, alike in its depth, its sincerity, its spiritual intensity, and the clarity of its vision. Our interest shifted to and fro between the Gospels and

the Book of Job, perhaps because one utters the highest faith and the other the deepest doubt. Distracted, tormented, torn between the warm faiths of the heart and the horrible facts of life, we turned now to the words of Jesus, now to the wailings of Job, and found comfort in both.

Indeed, one great value of the Book of Job to troubled souls in all ages lies in its boldness, its terrifying frankness, and the fact that it enables a suffering soul to say the worst things about God which can enter into the minds of good men in their hour of agony. In this respect it is like *Grace Abounding*, by John Bunyan, because it helps us to give vent to what else would be blasphemies, but are only cries of pain. Sorrow, pain, loss, make men either cynics or mystics; happy are we if the book of Job shows us the better way, melting our materialism into mysticism and our cynicism into song.

No one knows who wrote the Book of Job, or when or where, except that he was not only a supreme artist, but one of the master seers who uplifted this monolith on the fields of time, "towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world." It is an epic of the agony of faith, dateless and therefore eternal, its scene the wide spaces of the desert, its background the strange ways of the Infinite, "His long looks, and His glances of a thousand years." Much has been written about it, nothing better, perhaps, than the essay by Froude and the exposition by Strahan, in which insight and art unite in exegesis at its best. There is nothing else in the Bible to match the majesty of this book, unless it be the second

half of Isaiah, which has to do with the same mystery of undeserved suffering. If Job learns that suffering is not always the fruit of sin, but may be sent as a test of righteousness, the second Isaiah finds the key in the law of vicarious suffering whereby the righteous suffer, not with, but for the wicked. Insight can go no further; only Incarnation can solve it.

With the details of this book and the exposition of its great argument we are not now concerned; that were too great a task for an hour. Four things may be noted in outline, if only to show us how truly that far-off, unknown seer speaks to the men of our time. First of all, there is the shock, the terror of unexplained, undeserved adversity. The epic opens with a lovely picture of piety and prosperity, but suddenly, unaccountably, a noble, upright, kindly, God-fearing man is left on an ash-heap, his wealth gone, his children dead, his body hideous with loathsome disease, writhing in pain. It was shattering, confounding, appalling! No wonder his friends sat in dumb silence for seven days, listening to the railings of a man now angry in the insurrection of doubt, now bitter in defiance of the Divine. If only men were wise enough to sit in silence in the presence of woes so vast, engulfing the innocent and the wicked alike in one swift, wild, terrible calamity!

Second, when men did begin to speak it was to reveal the collapse of conventional theology and its failure to measure up to the facts. The friends of Job had a neat and glib theory that all suffering was due to sin; therefore, the fact that Job was suffering inconceivably

proved that his righteous life must have been a mask of hypocrisy hiding some nameless and horrible iniquity. Oddly enough, this glib logical dogma was still taught in the time of Jesus but he repudiated it, knowing that the circuit that transmits the shock of remote sin is too deep for our tracing. "Who did sin that this man was born blind—he or his parents?" he was asked. "Neither," was his reply; and he affirms the same truth in his talk about the fall of the tower of Siloam. Much of the woe of the world is due to sin, but not all of it. Even if we could trace all the results of sin in the World War, there would still remain a dark shadow of unexplained suffering, utterly beyond our ken. Our little dogmas, whether liberal or orthodox, go to pieces under the pressure of inscrutable fact, like the theology of Job and his friends. It is good to have it so, because when our house of cards is blown down we feel the chill wind of reality and must needs seek a larger faith.

Here also we see the intense, creative, spiritual energy of a perplexed man, driving him into new realms of truth, forcing him to face issues he had never grappled with before. He reached out, if haply he might find some truth not known hitherto, and became the Moses of the sky, linking the moral law within with the awful order of the universe. That is, he identified "the soul of the vast universe, with its abysses of mystery and its apocalypses of wisdom and power, with that sacred thing within our souls whose beauty leads us onward in never-ending quest"; appealing, like the man in the Tennyson poem "Despair," from all the gods of men to

the Great God, the true God, the God of Justice and of Love. There on the sands of Uz, tortured by filth and pain, his soul in agony, out of the treasures of the snow, the voices of the wind, the guidings of morning and the wanderings of night, the lonely sufferer learned the vast and awful care of the Infinite, and the awe and wonder and faith which make him one of the mighty memories of men. He lost everything, but he found God. He was the first to give God time and room; the first to learn the wideness of His ways and the wonder of His wisdom.

Such was the revelation of the Voice from the Cloud, at whose whisper a new and truer faith emerged to glorify the life of Job and bless our race. What did the Voice, speaking out of the storm, tell Job in answer to his questionings? Nothing, except that he did not know anything; and yet Job is subdued, satisfied, and healed! What does it mean? Did the genius of the author fail him where its light was most needed? No; only his words failed, as they alway do, in the presence of unutterable reality; for what answered all the questions of Job was not a proposition, but a Presence! What he learns is that, though his suffering is neither removed nor explained, God is not a Foe but a Friend. His doubts are dispelled, his wounds healed. He is at once awed and exalted. His old faith was unequal to the facts, not only because it was imperfect, but because it was faith at second-hand. Now his religion is no longer hearsay, but vision; it is an experience. Such is the process by which a mystic is made; for a mystic is not a mere dreamer, such less a dabbler in the occult, but one who, in the

struggle and bloody sweat of the moral life, has learned to know God for himself.

There are two kinds of religion in the world, the mediate and the immediate; the religion we receive and the religion we achieve. Had the life of Job moved on in sunlight, he would have held his neat little dogma to the end, living usefully and uprightly like many another, never guessing what treasures lay in the windless heights and the waveless depths. Without this tragedy he would never have felt that need of a nobler faith, much less have won it. The brute facts bludgeoned his faith and broke it, forcing him to fight for his life, but he won from hard fact a higher, more revealing faith which, in turn, forced the dark reality of life to yield him light. Surely this lesson is for us. Faith that is written in a book, or in a creed, is not enough; it must be our own, wrought out in the trial and tragedy of life. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!

What this means to the man in the pulpit we may learn if we turn to the "*Journal of Wesley*," which, beginning as a religious time-table, broadened until it became, and remains, one of the most valuable records of England. From 1725 to 1738 ought to be carefully studied by all who would know the secret of power in the pulpit. In 1725 Wesley read *Holy Living and Dying*, by Jeremy Taylor; it impressed him profoundly, and he dedicated himself to God. Moreover, he became a Methodist; that is, he adopted a method of spiritual culture, and it is only the truth to say that he never gave

it up as long as he lived. A year later he opened *The Imitation of Christ* and it opened up to him "the nature and extent of inward religion"; an insight deepened later by reading *Christian Perfection*, by William Law. During this time Wesley was what the world would call a Christian. He was earnest; his good works abounded; his longing for holiness was a passion. But there was no joy in his life, no rapture of realization. Elsewhere he tells us that till 1738 he had "a great concern for religion, but no sense of it."

Meanwhile he went as a missionary to Georgia, and while there he met a Moravian elder who led him to take another step along the inward way. "Do you know Jesus Christ?" was the question put him simply and directly—and he a Christian missionary! Such a question was altogether a novel one, and Wesley was at a loss for an answer. "I know that he is the Saviour of the world," was his reply. "True; but do you know he has saved you?" Wesley was full of perplexity, not knowing what the elder meant; but he answered: "I hope he has died to save me." Such was the mood of the missionary when he returned disappointed to England, and in January, 1738, he wrote in his Journal: "By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced of unbelief, having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled." A month later, "a day much to be remembered," he met Peter Bohler, who led him yet another step in the mystic way. As they talked together, it became evident that one was talking from the outside of religion, and the other from the inside. At last Bohler

cried, "My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away," and Wesley was astonished. He was ready to give up preaching but Bohler told him to go on preaching faith until he had faith, and then he would preach faith because he had it; a saying easily misunderstood, unless we remember that Wesley had no intellectual difficulty with regard to the truths of faith. He accepted truth with his mind, but it had not yet set his heart on fire. What followed on the evening of May 24, 1738, can only be described in his own words:

> In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Thereafter he was a free man, a new man, a man of power; and from that day began a ministry which must be reckoned one of the most miraculous forces in the history of England. In other words, God made Wesley a mystic, albeit he was slow to admit his affinity with mysticism, and at times was wont to be a keen critic of it. Yet we find him editing the writing of Guyon and a Kempis, and his movement, on one side, was lineally descended from that shining tradition; he became a fellow-citizen with the saints. There are many ways of the soul, many ways but one end. Some enter the place of

vision through tragedy, some through the valley of shadow, some quietly and naturally. Ellen Fowler, in her story of *The Farringdons,* tells of a girl who had grown up in a religious home, accepting the faith of her fathers. Later she learned, as so many do, the emptiness of faith at second-hand, and was about to give it up. One day in church, as the service proceeded, her eye fell upon a great east window where, in stained glass, the Figure of the Crucified was revealed:

> As she looked at the Figure which the world has wept over and worshipped for nineteen centuries, she realized that this was the symbol of all that she was giving up and leaving behind her—the sign of that religion of love and sorrow which men call Christianity. Its beauty had still power to touch her heart, if not to convince her intellect. Slowly her eyes were opened, and she knew that the figure in the east window was no sign of an imaginary renunciation, no symbol of a worn-out creed, but the Picture of a living Person, whose voice was calling her, and whose power was enfolding her and would not let her go. With the certainty which is too absolute for proof she knew in whom she now believed.

No matter how or when or where the veil is thus lifted, heart and flesh no longer cry out for the Living God, for He is with us. One such moment means more, teaches more, reveals more than all the libraries in the world. At the end of his agony Job learned the Truth of Truths, the first truth and the last, the truth that makes all other truth true, when he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee." The silence which follows is a silence not

of dumb submission, but of a wise humility mingled with awe. He repents for himself; he prays for his friends who, with the folly that was their only wisdom, sought to comfort him. Many years were given him to live, and riches and honors, but we may be sure he walked the earth with reverent feet, and that he was never again afraid of a storm. Happy is the man who, by whatever dim way has arrived at the quiet assurance in which there is the peace to labor, the patience to wait, and the power to endure; the faith that

> Somewhere beyond the stars
> Is a Love that is better than fate;
> When the night unlocks her bars
> I shall see Him, and I will wait.

## LIVING UNDER PRESSURE

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*Matthew* 11: 28-30.

No words in the Bible—no words ever uttered anywhere—touch so softly and surely the deep, haunting need of the human heart. A great English editor called them "the most satisfying words that have ever been uttered by human lips," alike for their melody and for their exquisite and healing sympathy. St. Augustine said that in Plato and Cicero he had found many an acute saying, and much to stimulate and enlighten; but nowhere had he found such words as these. No, we do not associate such words with Plato or Cicero—noble and wise as those teachers were—nor with any one else save him who uttered them. No one else has ever spoken to humanity in that manner; no one can do it. Still less could any one else fulfil such words, as he has done in every age to all who have learned his way, his truth, and his life. These words touch us like great music, and we use them as we use music, losing ourselves in their very sweetness, not caring to analyze their power or to de-

fine the spell which they cast over our anxious, hurrying days.

As we listen to his invitation, we feel that here, at last, is one who knows what is wrong with us, what we are groping after blindly, and how we may find it. The aspect of our human life which struck the Master as he watched it, was its restless weariness, and it appealed to his inexhaustible compassion. He saw men and women going to and fro, at labor and at leisure—poor men, rich men, learned men, untaught men—wretched and heavy-laden, bearing mountainous burdens of fear and foreboding, huge invisible loads of regret and care and sin. He saw it in their faces, he read it in their acts, and his pity went out like a tide to a troubled, tormented humanity. Lord Bacon said that "the more noble a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath"; hence the words of Jesus, so healing in their beauty, falling upon our hearts like the tones of evening bells, evoking one knows not what memories and meditations. They might have been spoken yesterday, or this morning, so true are they to the poignant need of our anxious time, when so many broken voices murmur through the world.

Human life in its modern phase is every day under terrific and increasing pressure, both from without and from within, and nowhere more so than in our great cities. As our social order becomes more intricate and involved, it seems to gather weight and speed, until it often seem like a monster we have created but cannot control. It was hoped that with the advent of a day when one machine did the work of fifty men, the burden would

be lightened. Instead it has increased, and the man behind the machine is more anxious than ever; he must either master his machine or be crushed by it. Everywhere the tension tightens, alike for those bound to the wheel of toil and those who bow down to the great god Mammon. In every trade, business, and profession men have to go at a killing pace to do what is expected of them. Life is tense, and the question is not so much how to succeed, as how to succeed and keep the soul alive. It is a jumpy, jerky, jazzy age, cluttered and confused, its scene shifting swiftly like a spot-light, in which we live in a hurrying day-by-dayness. No wonder the meaning of life is blurred in the scramble for the means of living, and the still small voice is drowned in the pell-mell medley of clattering events. The World War added new burdens of bereavement, of desolating disillusionment, of staggering debt and dismay. Men have lived a generation in ten years, and it is not strange that they are smitten with spiritual lassitude, as well as physical fatigue.

Literature reflects our hurried, burdened days, giving us bits, fragments, glimpses of life, rather than a vision of the whole; observations, not interpretations—a photograph, not a painting. Nothing is thought through; no problem is solved. If writers are feverish, readers are too often like the farmer in *The Lost Manuscript,* by Freytag, whose thoughts took living shapes as infinitesimal fairies swarming about his head—like gold and silver coins, grains of wheat and corn, horses, cows and pigs, and tiny banks and barns, hiding the flowers, the

landscape, the sunset. When he sat down to read they settled upon the page like a hive of bees, and only allowed him to read the market report and the prices of cows and pigs. What a world of truth and beauty is shut out by our rush and hurry, hiding the hills whence cometh our strength. The art of meditation, so rich and fruitful in other days—like the art of letter-writing—is well-nigh lost, for lack of time to practise it. Even the man of the pulpit, harried by so many duties and demands, finds his vision blurred by the clouds of daily dust from which it is hard to escape.

Surely the pressure from without will be lightened in time by a wiser ordering of things, but from the inward pressure there is no hope of release. Inevitably, as man becomes more sympathetic, the vast misfortunes round about him—and those afar off, brought near by the drawing together of the world—weigh more heavily upon his heart. The keener his sensibilities, the more impossible he finds it to be happy while others are miserable. It is not a nemesis to destroy his peace; it is the pressure within him of the spirit of God. The new sense of human solidarity, evoking more vivid social sympathies, is a revelation of God to our age, showing our partnership with the divine Burden-Bearer who shares our mortal tragedy. My lovely colleague at the City Temple, on her recent visit, seemed so troubled, so depressed, if not hopeless, at least helpless, in face of the riot of selfishness in the world—her rippling laughter hushed. Our earth is out of orbit, floundering in a welter of snarling greed and snappy envy, and the noblest

minds feel most keenly the weight of its woe. Nor will this pressure be lifted until our weary and heavy-laden humanity finds its peace in the kingdom of God on earth.

Every day the demands upon us of unfulfilled moral and social obligations multiply, as the world is jammed together and is learning to live together—not without friction, rancor, and tragedy. There was a time when a man could be a good citizen without much difficulty or worry. All that was required of him was that he pay his debts, respect the law, and do his work according to his lights. But to-day a new set of lights has been suddenly turned on, revealing more duties than he ever dreamed of before. Not many of us dare look a Christian sociologist in the face. After listening to a few lectures, a man who thought himself a God-fearing Christian feels like an enemy of society, so many are the causes soliciting his sympathy and aid. Crothers tells, in a charming essay, of a minister named Bagster, who, hearing the call of the modern conscience, tried to answer it. He grasped the live issues of the day, but alas, they were live wires and he could not let go, and the result was that he found himself "in the hands of a receiver," all gone to pieces and laid up for repairs. His song of joys became a song of obligations, and his music went off key.

Since we cannot escape the pressure of life—certainly not the pressure from within, lest we quench the Holy Spirit—our real question is how to meet it, how to bear it, how to win from it what it has to give? How can we carry our load and not be crushed by it? How can we

live in a troubled world with quietness and confidence, helping forward the cause of God? How can we win and keep a deep, tender, triumphant life of the spirit in such vast masses of scrambled humanity as those we call New York or Philadelphia? One thing at least is true: so long as the fret and jar of busy days does not get into the soul of a man he is safe. So long as he can keep an inward stillness and poise—what the old mystics called "peace at the center"—it does not matter how many things throng and crowd upon him. When, for any cause, that inner quiet gives way, and the din and hurry and litter of the world invade his soul, he goes to pieces and sinks, or else becomes crass of mind and hard of heart. Hence my wish to-day to urge upon you, with all possible emphasis, the duty and necessity of more attention to the inner life, both intellectual and spiritual, offering hints which experience has taught me are helpful and wise.

First, as to the life of the intellect. Gorky, in his autobiography, tells how he was kicked into the world and grew up amid conditions most depressing and debasing —drinking, thieving, and cruelty. He saw that people were vicious, not from ill-nature, nor even from poverty, but because life was dreary and meaningless—so stupid and hideous that they sought escape from its monotony in malicious diversions. From the brutality of his environment he was saved by poetry and art, which gave him a taste, a standard by which to judge the life round about him. While not hindering him from seeing reality, such as it was, nor cooling his desire to understand living

people, his fellowship with great minds hid him by a transparent but impenetrable veil from the infection of his surroundings. In like manner, we must have a wide and quiet place of vision, a point of vantage, from which to see life in the large and in long perspective, if we are not to be confused and overwhelmed by it. Every day teaches me the necessity—not the mere luxury—of communion with the master spirits of the race, as essential to the health and sanity of our lives.

Three things the great masters of literature have to give us, serenity, vision, and beauty; and the greatest of these is vision—without which the world within is an unlit chaos, and the world outside a wild bedlam. Books of the day come and go, leaving hardly a trace behind, giving us only passing thoughts of things eternal; but the great books lift us on the wings of vision to the mountain-tops. They see what other men look at; they kindle the mind and warm the heart; they give us a background against which to interpret the pageant of affairs. Nay, more; they cast over the tide of events the light of spiritual insight and moral values, by which we may correct our estimates and renew our faith in "the ultimate decency of things, and the veiled kindness of the Father of men." By helping us to see life steadily and see it whole, they reveal the eternal in the midst of time, and rescue us from the cynicism and pessimism to which they are tempted. They teach us to appeal to the years against the tyranny of days, and, more than all, that we are not alone in our fealty to the ideal which else may seem visionary and unreal.

How can we make friends with the masters of song and story in the rush and clutter of our busy days? Take time; have a method; seek a guide; choose some teacher who has achieved in his own life the victory you most need to win—study him, live with him, put your soul to school to his faith and genius. If the cast of your temperament is toward melancholy and misgiving, toward depression and self-despising, make friends with Emerson, and his serene, radiant, and benignant mind will be as a city of God set upon a hill. Meredith "learned to live much in the spirit, and to see the brightness on the other side of life," and he can help us to that vision—like a gleam of sunlight in a dark forest. The daring faith of Browning, his swift and fiery insight, make the living Christ real—"he himself with his human air"—as the answer to all questions and the solace of human hearts. They can help us to the nobler mood, the clearer insight, the broader outlook, needed to redeem us from the stress and strain of the world, and the sense of impotence and futility.

Already you have outrun me to my real point, which is a plea not only for "the glory of a lighted mind," but also, and much more, for a deepening of the life of the spirit which makes faith creative and religion a real presence. What we need, all of us, is fellowship with the Life that interprets life, knowledge of the truth that sets us free and the way without which there is no going. St. Paul found the sum of all truth, the source of all power, the secret of life and the world, in "the mind of Christ"; by which he meant not simply the piercing

spiritual intelligence of Jesus, but the total result and achievement of his character and personality—the revelation of the mind of God in humanity. For him the mind of Christ was the test of all truth, the ideal of all judgment, and the key to what else had been "the weary weight of an unintelligible world," with its storm of events and its tragedy of frustrated hopes. In that faith he found not only peace of heart, but power to overcome the obstacles that beset his heroic and dedicated life. For us, too, the way is open to a like precious experience, and a like triumphant faith; and it is to this victory of soul that Jesus invites us.

One word in the text is nearly always overlooked, and it is the key-word: "*Learn* of me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The peace Jesus promises is not a gift, but a trophy, a discipline, a lesson to be learned; since it is not the plan of God that character should be made up of gifts, but that it should grow. There is no royal road to anything, least of all to the divinest things of life. Nor did Jesus ask us to learn of him because he was wise and profound, but because he was "gentle and lowly of heart." Ruskin was right: "Vanity next to pride is the most fatal of all sins, fretting the whole depth of our humanity into storm." Had Jesus asked us to master some profound philosophy, our vanity would prompt us to accept. But he asks something simpler; he asks us to trust and follow him, as we must do with any teacher if we are to learn. Here is the first step, and until we take it we cannot get very far. What makes the

way of Jesus different from all other ways, is that it is not mere obedience to law, but a personal friendship. All is law, but all is love too. Once we actually yield our fevered spirits to the warmth and glow of his friendship, then indeed his yoke is easy and his burden light —easier than the hard way of the world.

Again, how can we who live in a teeming metropolis, where world-end peoples meet, enter into the mind and fellowship of Christ, "in whose will is our peace"? In the same way that we do with any other teacher, by living with him, thinking his thought, and following in his way. Surely, no matter how busy we may be, there is some time each day to read the little book which tells the story of the days of his flesh, where with sincere eyes we may search out the conditions of conscious fellowship with him. Here again we must put method and habit on the side of the highest life, reading each day a page or a scene, not merely critically, but imaginatively—living it over, reproducing its color and atmosphere in our hearts, until we can see his gesture and hear his voice—until time and distance disappear and we are there listening to him on the hillside or by the sea. Think of him in the morning when the day is new and the mind unstained with dust. Recall him at eventide, before the night has brought its dreams about your bed. Do this with humility and single-heartedness, praying to be as real as he is real, and the wonder will be wrought in you which has been wrought in innumerable lives, making them masters of life and time and death.

Wise men know that money does not bring happiness, that realized ambitions do not give content, and that to gain the whole world and lose the light of faith and the joy of hope is a bad bargain. What we need is to know the Lord of all good life, who alone can make life dearer, deeper, more serene, despite its pressure—he who has overcome the world, and will make us victors in his service. Ever his words echo in our hearts: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"—not rest from labor, but rest in labor, since we know that our labor is not in vain. Long ago, St. Augustine made reply for all our humanity when he said: "O Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

## WHAT GOD HATH NOT JOINED

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

*Matthew* 19: 6.

### § 1

The problem of Divorce, at all times so perplexing, has become acute in recent years. Tendencies too many to discuss have made it so. The mood and temper of the age, its yeasty unrest, its enfeebled spiritual authority, its shifting moral sanctions, its increasing economic pressure, the larger sphere and new demands of woman, the revolt against the standards of the last generation, with much else added, make the question complex and baffling. Even before the Great War the facts were disquieting enough; and since its close, the riot of divorce has become almost an orgy, aggravated, no doubt, by the erotic legacy which the war left us. In England, where the public mind is more exacting, conditions are said to be worse than with us, until many fear that we are infected with the virus which undermined the ancient societies.

None the less, it is very easy to see the problem out of all proportion, and to become unduly alarmed by it. The glass of modern fiction reflects the facts, but in an

exaggerated form, by bringing them to a focus and leaving other facts out of the picture. In a recent popular novel, called *Brass*, of five marriages studied, only one is endurable. It recalled a similar but much stronger story written some years ago, *Double Harness*, by Anthony Hope, to read which tempted one to conclude that marriage is what war is declared to be. The story is told with a brilliantly sinister power and acumen of soul-vivisection, in which worldly wisdom is salted with acrid wit, albeit touched, toward the end, with pity; showing what a ghastly thing marriage may be in the hands of fools and self-lovers, in whom a swinish sensuality is joined with an appalling shallowness of soul. Both books are patches of perdition; but no one in his senses thinks of taking either as a picture of married life. Happily, so far at least, in spite of all the ado made about it, divorce, in proportion to marriage, is the rare exception, which puts the rule of the goodness of marriage to the test, and proves it.

How to conserve both the values of the individual and the hard-won inheritance of the race makes the real problem, of which divorce is only one phase. That is, among right-thinking people it is so. As for the pusillanimous set of moral parasites, who pollute what they touch and pervert what they enjoy, a way can be found to deal with them as they deserve. More deadly by far is the subtle and pervasive cynicism in regard to marriage in our day. Much of our later fiction deals with it, not only lightly, but flippantly, and at times sordidly,

with seldom a gleam of moral insight or spiritual vision, as if marriage had become a bondage from which to secure release.

So, often, it is, because one or both of the parties to it are held in slavery, not by marriage, but by some dark inner bondage of soul. The non-moral society portrayed in *The Glimpses of the Moon*, by Edith Wharton, is typical of wide areas of modern life, including the precious pair of dead-beats whose story it tells; but one touch makes us pause.

> The little girl wound her arms about Susy's neck and leaned against her caressingly.
>
> "Are you going to be, soon, then? I'll promise not to tell if you don't want me to."
>
> "Going to be divorced? Of course not! What in the world made you think so?"
>
> "Because you look so awfully happy," said Clarissa Vanderlyn simply.

Such precocious cynicism in the nursery fills one with dismay, in that it poisons the springs of life. Nor is it so rare as some imagine, in an age when the hardships of virtue are an argument for lenity to vice, and the difficulty of duty is a reason for shirking it. Living in an air of indulgence, we are soft, flabby, and morally short of wind. If a thing is disagreeable, we do not do it. Homes are wrecked, social life is undermined, and children are sent adrift, because, forsooth, "I was unhappy"; just as in business life statutes are broken and moral principles disregarded, because "a man must get

ahead." Trace almost any of our ills to its source, and its roots will be found in our worship of success, our cult of comfort, our quest of a "good time," our selfish love of the easy way, which turns out in the end to be a path of flame!

§ 2

No wonder jurists, educators, publicists, and churchmen alike are puzzled, not alone by the spirit and facts of the time, but by a disinclination to face the facts squarely and think the issues through. Even among teachers of the finest moral insight, there is the widest diversity of judgment. At one end is Dr. Felix Adler, who will not allow divorce for any cause whatever, not even for infidelity to the marriage vow; though he will agree to separation, if conditions are intolerable. At the other end is Mr. Louis Post, who holds that any one who asks for a divorce ought to have it; because such a request shows that real marriage, if it ever existed, is dead and ought to be buried.[1] Between the two extremes, we find a long gamut of opinion, all the way from the sacramentarian to the libertarian, making the solution as much a medley as the problem. Meanwhile the church,

[1] The reference to Mr. Post, taken out of the context of his wise and well considered book, *Ethical Principles of Marriage and Divorce,* is hardly just. It implies that he is an extreme individualist, if not a libertarian, which is very far from true. For religious reasons, he himself holds to the beautiful doctrine of "eternal marriage"; but he discusses the whole question from many angles. Indeed it is because of his fine spiritual insight that I venture to use him as an example, in preference to Ellen Key, in her *Love and Marriage,* or Bernard Shaw, in the preface to his *Getting Married*——though Shaw has a common sense which usually protects him from his own extravagances.

when it does not actually evade the issue, falls back upon an ancient formula of doubtful exegesis, or else spends its time debating whether the word "obey" should be retained in the marriage rite!

It is indeed strange. At a time when we hear so much about the Social Gospel, no one seems able or willing to show us how a spiritual religion can cleanse, enlighten, and consecrate the relations of the sexes, which are the foundations of the social order. There is sore need of clear thinking and plain speaking on a cluster of questions—sex, marriage, birth-control, divorce—which we dare not much longer ignore. My former colleague at the City Temple, in her series of addresses, *Sex and Common Sense*, is almost the only one who has dared to deal with such issues. Miss Royden has spoken as the situation demands, frankly and without fear, reverently and with a wise charity. It is in accord with the fitness of things that the greatest woman preacher of our time should render this service, giving the woman point of view in respect of questions on which women have been too long silent. Every page of her book is aglow with human sympathy and spiritual vision, as she seeks the truth in the light of the facts of life and the mind of Jesus.

For, whatever theology we may hold, not one of us but is ill at ease in his mind if he feels that Jesus is on the other side of any question. Nor is his teaching at all obscure, if we remember that he was a light-bringer and not a mere lawgiver. Those who read his words about divorce as literal law ought, in all honesty, to interpret

his other teachings in the same manner; for example, his words about selling all our goods and giving to the poor, and his injunction to non-resistance. It is odd to find men so literal on one point and so liberal on others. The spectacle of cruelty or cowardice masquerading in the guise of orthodox exegesis is familiar enough. Plainly, if we really want to know the meaning of any precept of Jesus, we must read it in the context and atmosphere of his teaching as a whole; in the free, sane, exalted light of his mind. Nay, more; we must be ready for daring adventure if we mean to follow his truth and make trial of his way of life.

As on so many other subjects, Jesus left nothing really new to be said about marriage and divorce, if we keep in mind his revolutionary attitude toward woman. To a captious question from his critics, he made reply, lifting the whole subject out of the mire into a higher air, where marriage is a permanent union, and a lustful look is adultery. Neither ascetic nor eugenist, free equally from prudishness and laxity, Jesus saw the fact of sex for what it is. With him, marriage, like the Sabbath day, is made for man, not man for marriage. Sex is secondary. Woman, in his thought, is not primarily an instrument of sex, nor even a potential mother. She is not first of all a woman, but a human soul of incomputable value and sanctity, to degrade whom is desecration. Therefore, to "look upon" her merely as an object of desire is a degradation of personality and a treason against God. Thus, in a world of putrid impurity, Jesus set forth his ideal of the new social order that he sought

to found, in which all the facts of life are holy, and all its fellowships happy. To such a life his disciples are called, and for the man who lives in his truth and follows in his way there is no problem of divorce at all, since the Spirit of Christ forgives even the ultimate infidelity—as he himself did in the court of the Temple.

What all this means in marriage is made vivid by a story told me in the North of England, of a man whose wife, soon after her marriage, fell into vicious ways, and went from bad to worse. One evening he came home to find, as he had often found before, that she had gone on a new debauch. He knew only too well in what plight she would return, after two or three days of a nameless life. In an empty and cheerless house he sat down to look the fact in the face, the better to learn what he must do. The worst had happened too many times to leave him any hope, and he saw what lay before him. The words of the marriage rite, "for better, for worse," had now a terrible meaning; but he reaffirmed his vow on his knees. When a friend who knew the facts ventured to commiserate him, he answered, "Not a word!" His wife did not mend her ways, but died in his house some years later, a poor wreck, sunken in shame, with his hands spread over her in pity and prayer! Such is the Christian way of dealing with a tragic marriage; and before we use the words of Jesus as stones to throw at others, it behooves us to look into our own hearts.

Judged by the real spirit and purpose of Jesus, the attitude of the church to-day in respect to marriage is untenable. Few of the marriages "solemnized" in our

churches are Christian in any sense, since many of those so married do not even profess Christian faith, much less try to live by it. At best, many are only nominal Christians, and as often as otherwise they have not been instructed as to what Christian marriage means. Yet they receive the blessing of the church, and, by implication at least, are expected to live by its vows. It is nothing short of absurd. Indeed it is open to debate whether it is right to impose an ideal, meant to apply only to followers of Christ, as a law upon those who do not take upon themselves the obligations of his faith. In fact, the only honest thing for the church to do is, either to distinguish between Christian marriage and common marriage, or else to refuse to be a party to any marriage except between those who make avowal of Christian principles; and then to insist that such a union is indissoluble by default of either party. By so doing it will lose in popularity, but it will gain in self-respect; and by being in line with the teaching of Jesus, it may the better hope to do by conversion what it fails to do by coercion. For coercion it is, whether the ideal of Jesus be written into a law, or enforced by social pressure.

## § 3

Now, consider. In the world as it is—which Keats calls "a vale of soul-making"—where the Kingdom of Heaven often seems like a visionary scene suspended in the sky, there are all kinds of folk, of all grades of mind, character, and condition; refined, vulgar, clever,

stupid, and neutral. People marry for their own reasons, or for none that any one can discover; and many of them are not fit for marriage at all, unworthy of its sanctity and incapable of its high demands. Mistakes are inevitable. Hasty, ill considered, foolish marriages are made every day, foredoomed to failure. All kinds are braided together in marriage—the degenerate, the diseased, the abnormal, the criminal, the roué, those of unbalanced minds and tainted blood—many whose union can mean nothing but tragedy, and whose parenthood is a social disaster. In such a world, as he who has eyes must see, divorce, in one form or another, is a necessity, if not a commandment.

Those whom God has joined together are not lightly to be put asunder; but there are those whom God has not joined together. It needs no insight to see that there are cases where to continue the marriage relation is a deeper affront to morality and public order than any divorce could be. There are conditions of degeneracy, of infidelity, of malicious perversion of all that is holy in the marriage vow, killing not only love but respect, and dissolving any real union by automatic process. There are malignities of disposition, outrages against personality, mordant hostilities, and cruelties of behavior far worse in their erosive and blighting destructiveness than any brutality of physical violence, or any deflection from the fidelities of wedlock. Such marriages are a lie, and if we really desire truth and purity, some way must be devised to heal these social cankers. One hesitates to describe the attitude of those who seem to

prefer regularity to reality, and are willing to tolerate any horror so long as it is hidden under the smooth surface of society.

Nor is divorce by any means an unmixed evil. So far from being an attack on marriage, it is in fact an attempt to protect its sanctity and preserve its permanence. When allowance is made for every kind of abuse, from which nothing human is exempt, if there are moral reasons against divorce, so there are moral reasons in favor of it. This at least is true: the sanctity of marriage lies in a sacred union of hearts, which the church may bless and the state make legal, but which neither can create or annul. Where love is, there marriage is; where love is not, marriage has ceased to be. For marriage to go on when love is dead puts before us a situation which, if described for what it is, would require the use of words that cut like whips of fire. If a loveless marriage is chaste just because it is legal, then chastity is a thing of rite and rote, an empty form and not a principle of purity at all. No wonder the late Lord Bryce once said that the morality of a country is not to be measured by the number of divorces, but as often as not the other way round. Its condition may be really worse if its people cynically allow their social life to rest upon anything less noble than the bond of moral love, which alone can make it holy and enduring.

Often enough divorce is silly, sad, nauseating, and in other ways afflictive of the community. Often, too, it may be a greater mistake than marriage, and it carries penalties of its own known only to those who have had

to face it. Either way it is a tragedy for the child, who is the most pitiful figure in the plot, whether he is bereft of one parent, or doomed to live in a home where love is only a memory. Instead of being the sybaritic luxury so many people think it is, its victims are in fact sacrifices, more or less involuntary, to the general good. It may have the value of a horrible example, to deter others from rushing into a marriage of fancy or of worldly station. Its glaring publicity, its hideous revelations—ridiculous when not disgusting—are not things to be invited. At best, divorce is a clinic, a piece of social surgery attempting to salvage the wreck of marriages which are manifestly mistakes, if not tragedies. Anyway it will go on, until we find some better way whereby a marriage may be ended legally, when it has already been ended morally.

§ 4

To discuss what should be the law of the land in the matter of divorce is beyond my competence. Still, all must agree that in the social control of marriage, as of anything else, law must be an embodiment of the living will of the people, and not merely the stony grip of the dead hand of the past. The South Carolina law, which refuses to allow divorce on any ground, is clearly the expression of a tradition, rather than the voice of to-day; more the sentiment of a proud and conservative past, than a legal aid to the social morality of the present. The ideal of home life in the State is of a high order, but not more so than in other States of the South, where

divorce is permitted. Nor does the law seem to apply with equal rigidity to the black folk, among whom marital irregularities are quite common. Even so, it is easily evaded by setting up a legal residence elsewhere, before returning to the State to live. For all these reasons, the law is hardly a case in point; but it does serve to show how the developing moral judgment of a community may be thwarted, if not arrested.

For a better example of the workings of a rigid law—albeit not so stern, in that it allows divorce for infidelity—we must go to England, as revealed in the Rutherford case recently decided. The man was a brute from the first and all along, ending his career by a foul murder, for which he escaped execution on plea of insanity, which was no doubt justified. Years passed, and the wife sought divorce on grounds of adultery—proved at the first trial, but later dismissed—and her petition was accordingly denied. Had the man not been a lunatic, he would have been executed, and the wife would now be free. Because he is insane, she must remain, in law, his wife—tied to a dead body, with no hope of release. Here is a marriage of no value to society, much less to the parties to it, since no one argues that they should live together, even if it were possible. Why should not the woman have her liberty and the right to remarry if she so desires? If it be true that hard cases make bad law it is equally true that bad law makes hard cases; and an injustice so atrocious ought to move even a staid people to mitigate the severity of a law which is neither just nor merciful.

About all that we need ask of the law is that it set up a safeguard, as much against a rigid cruelty as against the laxity which makes possible the consecutive polygamy so often flaunted in our faces by moral morons. So much is plain; but beyond that the law cannot go very far. My own feeling is that the less detailed the law is, the wiser it will be, provided we institute special courts for the purpose, in which both men and women shall sit as judges, where issues as difficult as they are delicate may be dealt with in a manner worthy of their solemnity. Such courts, it need hardly be added, should have the sanctity and privacy of a confessional; and between the application for a divorce and the granting of it, there should be a pause of time for reconsideration, to guard against rashness and action taken in haste. In the most favorable environment, it is never easy for an outsider to pass on the conditions which make a marriage intolerable. Often a mere trifle may be the last straw on a burden of misery or indignity carried for years, making it unbearable. At any rate, as we dare not be satisfied with the present system, if we cannot devise a better plan, we deserve to live under a menace.

A rather wide pastoral experience, on both sides of the sea, has ripened some thoughts into conviction. For one thing, he will look in vain who hopes to find a simple solution of this sadly tangled problem; it does not exist. Each case of unhappy marriage stands by itself, and must be judged by its own facts, which refuse to fit into any glib formula. For that reason, a rigid and detailed law as to the grounds for divorce in all cases, without re-

gard to the human equation in each case, works frightful cruelty and injustice. But much can be done without law. In England, during the last year of the war, and the awful year of moral collapse following it, when men were returning to their homes after years of absence, conditions were appalling. My study at the City Temple was a confessional, in which tales were told that made the heart sick, revealing the weakness of poor human nature, its dark dishonor, its selfish sin. Yet even then, as before and since, often in cases where divorce might have been legally obtained, it was possible, by tact, by moral suasion, by sheer love of young lives astray, to reawaken love, adjust disputes, and save homes from ruin.

After all, divorce is the dark end of the problem; the real remedy lies in making marriage a nobler and finer thing than it is. The whole conception of the relation of the sexes must be lifted to a higher level, and interpreted by moral intelligence and spiritual vision, in the light of human realities and social values. For the moment, a revolt against the prudishness of a former time has swept too far toward a frankness that is not modest, and a liberty hard to know from license. None the less, out of the agitation of our times a clearer insight will emerge, and a finer fellowship in marriage; but not without bitter suffering, much of which might be averted in individual cases by very simple arts. For the most part, it is what workmen call "an inside job"; and until we have learned to live with ourselves and keep the peace, we may not hope to live with another without friction.

## LIVING WITH OURSELVES

I am not alone.

*John* 8:16.

ONCE upon a time—or, to tell the fact, between 1830 and 1886—there lived in New England one of the strangest and most baffling women that ever wandered out of fairy-land. Her name was Emily Dickinson. She was not daily bread, as one who knew her truly said. She was star-dust. Of heavenly lineage, she was lightning and fragrance, all mixed up with a smile. How such a being ever lived in the solemn air of the valley of the Connecticut, is hard to know. 'Tis a wonder that she was not burned as a witch, for she was at least bewitching, a poet of airy, eerie fancy, a seer of piercing insight, "the confederate of every contraband desire," the very genius of Never, Never Land. Half-elf, half-angel, yet in all ways a woman, she was in no wise akin to the weird recluse eating her heart out in morbid, unhappy longing, as the college teachers tell us.

No, she was ridiculously happy, and if her life story reads like a myth, it must needs be so to fit the facts, so elusive was she, so oddly wise withal, and deep-seeing. To live, she said, is so startling that it leaves but little room for other occupations. Yet she had time to write bits of verse betimes, which she jotted

down on any chance piece of paper and sent, on the sly, to her sister-in-law, who lived the width of a green lawn away. These have now been gathered into a tiny book, as a memorial to the love of those "dear dead women," and it is a book as unlike any other book on earth as the woman who wrote it was unlike any other mortal that ever lived. The note of her song is in these lines:

> Adventure most unto itself,
> The Soul condemned to be
> Attended by a Single Hound—
> Its own identity.

Fascination was her element. Lovers came more than once, and as often found themselves bewildered beggars about a throne. One might as well try to marry the aurora borealis or the morning star, as to capture one so richly companioned by her own spirit and whose life was a game of hide-and-seek with God. No doubt it was this "other loneliness," not occasioned by want, or friend, or lot, that made her shy as a wild bird, aloof but never alone, the while she played with children to whom she seemed akin, or flitted like a shadow upon the hillside, "a motion known to no other mortal." For all that she was so happy, she was never able to disengage herself from "that eternal preoccupation with death," as she called it. She had no fear of death, but only wonder at it, and the "overtakelessness" of those who had accomplished it. Her poetry is a blend of levity and profundity, and there are lines that drop a plummet

into the uttermost depths of these strange souls that dwell in clay. As we may read:

> There is a solitude of space,
> A solitude of sea,
> A solitude of death, but these
> Society shall be,
> Compared with that profounder site,
> That polar privacy,
> A soul admitted to itself:
> Finite infinite.

Emily Dickinson was wise in that she faced the first and primal fact about our human lot, that life is as lonely as death. This mystery of solitude is one of the essential facts of life, and we have to understand it if we are to achieve in ourselves all that we are intended to be. Society crowds us on all sides, and yet we are alone, think alone, feel alone, and at last die alone. At first that is an appalling fact, heavy enough to crush the stoutest heart, but face it we must or soon or late, and it is better to face it calmly, since we must take life as it is if we are to make anything out of it. Never did men need to face this fact as they do to-day, when our poets are singing of the social man, and we are thinking in terms of the mass. Man is a social being, and he lives in a network of social relations, but he lives alone—isolated, insulated, indeed, a spirit in prison and left alone that his soul may grow. Arnold was right when he wrote:

> Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,

Dotting a shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone.

Upon this primal fact religion builds; it is the basis and beginning of the long quest of man for a Great Companion. Its root is solitude, its flower fellowship. Driven by an awful loneliness, man seeks God, and finds himself, his fellow-man, and God. As a great teacher has told us, religion is what man does with his solitariness; if he is never alone, he is never religious. With this agrees the piercing insight of Middleton Murry, whose life of *Jesus, Man of Genius*, is one of the most vivid and rewarding books of our time: "When we stand naked and alone, with the universe over against us, then is the beginning of religion. The knowledge that we thus stand alone, with nothing but a vain imagination to shield us from the immensities—that knowledge, felt and experienced, corroding and cauterizing our secret souls, is religion. If religion is other and less than this, it means nothing to me." That is to say, religion, if it be as real and deep as life itself, frees us first from loneliness and then from fear—fear of life, fear of death, fear of anything that life or death can do to us—which no "vain imagination" can do. Instead of being an escape from reality, religion is a facing of the deepest, darkest facts of life—facing the worst and finding the best. No man is religious who is afraid of the universe, or who is "afraid to go home in the dark" for fear of meeting his own soul.

Yet that is the torment and tragedy of our time; men

do not know how to be alone, and are afraid to be alone. They are herded together, huddled together, moving in masses, restless, wistful, fear-haunted, as if some nameless terror awaited them in the lonely places of the soul. Never were human bodies so jostled; never were human souls so much alone. Solitude is shunned; meditation is a lost art. Ages ago Julian of Norwich, writing in a time of tumult—in the time of Chaucer and the Peasants' Rising—said that the world within is so vast and deep that the world without is no larger than a hazelnut. To-day it is the other way round: the universe is so vast that the life of the soul has shriveled to the size of a tiny island in a lonely sea. The task of religion today is to rediscover and reclaim the heights and depths and richness of the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us, else the human heart will break, or, worse still, grow cynical and hard. Mysticism is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Our life is obsessed by external things; our literature gives us little more than passing thoughts of external realities. Once more we must face the soul, explore its awful solitudes, map and chart its depths and distances, and discover the permanent fountains of faith and power by which alone man can live, lest as the wages of hurry we lose our way in the dark.

From this fact there is no escape, albeit men are always trying to get away from it. Hence our mad quest for pleasure, for distraction, for disenthralment, which is one of the saddest aspects of the life of our time. Wells says that we are "God-sakers," meaning that we are always saying, "For God's sake let's do something!"

When we are not doing something, going somewhere, or returning, dressing to make the next date, life becomes an empty and aching blank. Amusement, if it means a turning away from the Muses, is healthy and wholesome, but with too many it is only an effort to fill up the empty spaces of time and get away from the burden of self. The exertions, and even struggles, of people to avoid as far as possible all seasons of loneliness, are pathetic beyond words. Dr. Johnson says that when he first went to Ranelagh Gardens the gay throng gave him a sense of expansion such as he had seldom known. But it went to his heart to consider that there was not one in that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think. Not one, not even Johnson himself, who was never so miserable as when he was alone. How frequently do those who are most sensitive to boredom find themselves "bored to extinction" by solitude, with its inevitable self-companionship. No doubt Pascal was right when he said that the man who lives only for himself hates nothing so much as being alone with himself.

Somewhere in the back of every mind there is a blue closet which no one can enter, because the door will open to none but yourself. No one else has the key. That innermost room may be a torture-chamber or a shrine of peace. According as it is one or the other, so is life unhappy or happy; so is a man a failure or a success. No other test tells anything. If the pictures on the walls of that inner room are horrible, its trinkets tawdry, and hideous shapes have their hidings there, the very thought of entering it may be an agony, but enter it we must.

An unseen hand drags us into the place of pain. If it be a place of beauty, a chamber of peace, we are glad to enter our closet, as Jesus bade us do, shut out the din of the world and pray. One can bear any disappointment, any sorrow, if that inner sanctuary is a place of refuge and worship. Nor is it strange that we collapse and go to pieces if that inner room is a place where ghosts affright and the hag of remorse awaits our coming. For what salary would you agree to live with a sneak-thief the rest of your life? Yet that is what the sneak-thief himself must do. Hell is self-acquaintance. It is here; it is anywhere. The worst punishment for sin, it has been said, is to be the sort of a man who can commit the sin, and be doomed to live with that man.

So, then, since we have to live thus alone, the secret of life is to learn to live with ourselves, or we cannot live with any one else and keep the peace. Many a marriage is a failure just because the man or the woman, or both, do not know how to live with themselves. It is no wonder that they cannot live together. Before the fall of man it was said, "It is not good for man to be alone." Since that time, it is doubtful if he has even been fit for anything else than to be alone. At any rate, a large part of his salvation is to be in solitary confinement. For, so long as there is one human arm to lean on, one heart to share the burden of his sins and follies, he shifts his responsibilities and wears his armor lightly. But when every human prop falls away, then only does he gird himself for the fight and hunt for the God within him. "When is a man strong until he feels alone?" asks

Browning, and the witness of the ages is with him. When we have solved the problem of living alone, we have solved, as well, the problem of living with God and our fellows.

Dostoevsky tells of a Russian who "only believed in God in the night." There are many such, and that is one of the main things that makes death so formidable. For the first time, in the solemn pause between two worlds, many men face at once an unknown self and an unknown God, and there is a dire strangeness in the encounter. And both calamities come because they did not, like David in his confessional Psalm, face their own souls, and invoke the mercy of God to create in them a clean heart. There must be no subterfuge, no disguise, no excuse, no compromise. Each man must face his own soul and make terms with it, if he is to live at peace with himself. What is foul within us, God will forgive and cleanse; what is low, He will exalt. Boyesen says that when he returned to Norway after many years he was met at the pier by the man he used to be, and that his Lost Self would hardly speak to him, remarked that he affected a foreign accent, and reproached him for turning from the old ways. But the good grace of God will make us worthy of that lost self with whom we lived in the days when life was new and the heart was pure. It seems impossible, but it is true, as a rejoicing multitude can testify with songs of thanksgiving.

Inasmuch as we cannot flee from God, let us take refuge with Him. Here is the only real way to a solution of the difficult problem of living with ourselves, and

there is no other. "If I do not always keep step with my companions it is because I hear a different drummer," said Thoreau, and hied himself off to Walden Pond to listen to another and higher music. If we look into the lives of the saints, we learn that, when a man has faced his own soul fearlessly, he finds God, and is "never less alone than when alone." From Augustine to Aquinas, from Fox to Fénelon, such is the testimony of those who have made the great discovery. They sought solitude, hiding in wilderness and cloister, to find the secret for mankind. Bunyan, cast into prison, made his cell forever glorious with his dream of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. When the wings of the spirit began to flutter in Fox, he was told to "drink beer and dance with the girls." Instead he made himself a suit of leather and went forth into the wilderness to be alone, and from that silence came a mighty stream of sweetness and light and the leadership of faith. Why did these men find such joy and power in the lonely places which we are trying so distractedly to escape?

Surely here is a secret more worth the winning than all the pretty prizes of the world, even the peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Wordsworth realized it when "he retired to the sanctuary of his own heart, hallowing the Sabbath of his own thoughts." How many men plan to retire from business, and never ask what they are to retire to. Even the squirrel is wiser than the man who makes no provision for the winter of life. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and learn a lesson in spiritual thrift, against the time when life will be bare and

the summer loveliness faded. The wisest of all Teachers told us to lay up treasures of mind and heart where moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. He knew that the life of a man consists not in the abundance of things he has, but in the richness of what he is. Things take wings and fly away. Time robs us of all save that wealth of soul which we winnow from the years. Death takes our friends from us one by one, leaving us to walk alone. There is nothing for it, fellowmen, but to learn the secret of "the practice of the presence of God."

Come away from the noisy world. Enter into the silence. Trust thyself with God.

Prayer promotes the presence of God, humbles the mind, and detaches it from the things that perish with the using.

In solitude and meditation the soul advances with speedy steps and learns the hidden truths of the voice of God.

Thus Bernard, Fénelon, and a Kempis would lead us thither where we fear to go, following the Master of all good life who said, "I am not alone because the Father is with me." These are they who learned, by "standing in the stillness," such unspeakable and exalting companionship as the rushing, seething world, with its passionate interest and activity, can never give. They knew, as we know, that when we have grasped all that home and friendship and labor or play can give us, we are not satisfied; that the heel of Achilles makes him still vulnerable to the arrow of lonely discontent. They knew that the secret of living with ourselves, and so with

others, is found by making friends with Him whose we are, who has made us for Himself, and whose whisper is more melodious than all the music of the world. Teachers they were of that life of faith and fellowship which cleanses the heart, casts out all fear, and makes solitude a sacrament. Withal, they were so happy, so lovable, so free in spirit, and so heroic in their service of mankind.

Such is the mystery of man the solitary, and a hint as to the meaning of it and how to use it. As Brierly said, our isolation is an insulation, and that for the transmission of a message. If we are shut off from everything else, it is that we may the better hear it. The message is the whisper of a hidden way. When we learn the meaning of faith, of love, of sacrifice, of prayer, we cease to be lonely. The silence becomes eloquent, the darkness companionable, and the dimness of the inner room is radiant with the light of His presence. As at the beginning, so at the end, let me quote the words of sweet Emily Dickinson, whose fugitive bits of song are woven of insights, reverences, and fantastic gaieties, as of one who had learned to live with herself, and therefore was so lovely to live with. These words, bidding us so to order our innermost life that

> To this apartment deep
> No ribaldry may creep,
> Untroubled this abode
> By any man but God.

## THE SACRAMENT OF BEAUTY[1]

And the Lord God planted a Garden eastward in Eden.
*Genesis* 2: 8.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.
*Psalms* 90: 17.

### § 1

In nothing is God more prodigal than in His love of beauty; in nothing more prophetic. It overflows the world like a heavenly Nile, bathing all things in its gentle grace. Our earth is not a hut with bare benches and dingy walls, but a palace of enchantment with endless galleries of art. Pictures hang everywhere, in the glow of wondrous sunsets, in the fold of hills, in forest vistas, in the colors of the sea. This we do know; the Spirit of this scene loves the beautiful, and the soul of man is subdued to wistfulness by its wonder.

The order of nature is the Art of God. It is the eternal Sacrament, the vow of God to hallow and bless the life of man. The "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" also makes for beauty; and in the final ethic the two are one. The great Soul of the world is the enemy of ugliness and the friend and lover of the beau-

[1] The Flower Sermon, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri, May 9, 1926.

tiful. By a sweet strategy, in spite of the ugliness made by the sin of man, beauty is forever overcoming it. Ivy climbs over ruined temples, and poppies grow in the fields of Flanders, as if to hide the horror. It must be that beauty has a meaning and power we have hardly guessed, much less fathomed. It is so silent, so pervasive, so winsome that we forget to analyze or define its ministry to the life of man.

The response of man to the beauty of nature awoke almost with the waking of his soul, and it was allied with faith. By a sure instinct the earliest thinkers divined that beauty is a mediator between flesh and spirit, a path to God, a gate opening into the true and the good. The mystery of light, evoking the miracle of color, swayed the first poets of the race with rapture. From a far time, on yonder side of the Pyramids, we hear them singing of the ecstasy of morning and the mercy of evening. Adown the ages the music gathers and grows, celebrating the strange and solemn loveliness of the world. Alike in the Valley of the Kings in ancient Egypt, and among the English lakes, the artist soul sees in Nature the outshining of an Unseen Artist, whose beauty is a benediction, at once a token of love and a teacher of truth.

Here is the sign of promise for humanity, like the rainbow after the Deluge. Love of beauty bespeaks that in man which saves him from the all-devouring flood of mortality. It sets him apart from the beast, as a dweller in the realm of spiritual ends. A sunset, which to a horse means nothing, makes the heart of man ache, he

knows not why. Dawn fills him with a nameless joy half akin to pain, and if the stars are lamps they light an endless pathway. If he feels that he was not made to die with the tender race of flowers, it is because the meanest flower that grows awakens within him "thoughts too deep for tears"—thoughts that wander through eternity in quest of the God of the flowers. He is not a fellow of fading flowers, but the heir of a beauty unfading and full of hope. Beauty haunts him, both by its magnetism and its mysticism—

> Like hues and harmonies of evening,
> Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
> Like memory of music fled,
> Like aught that for its grace may be
> Dear; yet dearer for its mystery.

## § 2

When we reduce beauty to its elements we have only color, form, proportion, harmony. Something escapes us. There is a nameless grace too elusive for analysis. It may be, as Plato said, that beauty has an ethereal and evasive quality which belongs only to itself, but we can in no wise define what that quality is. It never impresses us as an end in itself. Its intimations are prophetic, and when we have finished our analysis and look out the window at a sunset how poor and pale our theory is! There banks of cloud are touched as by magic into something rich and strange—something, it would seem, other and diviner than themselves—and our philosophy

is forgotten in an ecstasy of joyous longing. The sky becomes a cathedral window.

Why is the world so beautiful? Why do flowers bloom, like stars of the earth shining at our feet? Why do birds sing? What is the spell which music casts over us, evoking we know not what memories and dreams? Why such an "overplus of value," as some one has named it, beyond the needs of utility and the wildest fancy of poetry? Why such extraordinary extravagance in loveliness, as if Someone were playing upon the harp of our senses in sight, scent, sound, taste, trying to awaken an answering aspiration? Whence the tireless energy of beauty which makes it overflow into every nook and cranny of the world that offers the least opportunity, as though the order of the world were the sworn and determined foe of ugliness and the plighted lover of the beautiful? Why is it that beauty is allied not only with every one of our physical senses, but still more with that in us akin to Love?

These questions go very deep, and he who tries to answer them learns that beauty has meanings that lie near to the heart of life. Assuredly it is more than mere decoration, more than the veneer upon the wood, more than Horace's purple patch upon an old garment. Nay, it is something profoundly inwrought into the fiber of things —not truth, nor wisdom, nor love, but "the rose on the lips of truth, the light in the eyes of wisdom"; the glow in the heart of love—a revelation of an ineffable refinement, a redeeming spirituality, at the heart of the world. What is beauty? Why can it be but an unveiling of the

Eternal, a sacrament of the Love of God whose presence makes the kindly earth "a living church of ancient joy?" It is an offering of Divine Grace, inviting man to lend his soul to the beauty of holiness and to live his life in the holiness of beauty.

Truth, Beauty, Goodness—these are the three aspects under which the life of God is known to us. They are distinct but not separate, and so intertwined that they are not to be unraveled. When beauty is severed from truth, it loses half its loveliness, as the history of decadent art attests. What goodness bereft of beauty is has been shown us in the bare, ungracious life of the Puritan. Only when they are united in happy fellowship, a trinity in one—beauty the native robe of truth, and goodness a ritual of beauty—do we behold the unsearchable and secret Reality which, as Goethe said, never itself appears, but reflections of which are visible when truth weds beauty and goes about doing good.

> This is Truth—eternal Reason—
> That in Beauty takes its dress,
> And, serene through time and season,
> Stands complete in Righteousness.

## § 3

Surely, by an ordered logic of revelation, a world that holds so much beauty must be made for the triumph of the good and the true. By the same token, the whole duty and destiny of man is to make his life as lovely as the world in which he lives, where there is truth to seek,

love to win, and beauty passes with the sun on her wings. The divine theory of mankind, as foretold in the Bible, begins in a Garden and ends in a City, both built to beauty—the one a prophecy, the other its fulfilment. Yet between them what horror of ugliness—beauty blighted by greed, defiled by sin, defamed by cruelty and lust and misery! How strange that man has lived so ugly a life in a world so lovely!

Alas and alack, Adam fell in his Garden, as we fall in ours, blind to the perpetual persuasions of beauty. Beauty broods over us, seeking to enter our life and give form to truth, color to love, and romance to holiness—and we do not see. Even in rags and sin man lives under a radiant sky which, at sunset, uplifts an altar of prayer. In a world dewy to the dawn with a lark-song over it, man wages war, mixing blood with mud, leaving a scar upon the face of God.

> Wanting is—what?
> Summer is redundant,
> Blueness abundant,
> —Where is the blot?

As Browning sees it, Nature needs beauty in the life of man to fulfil her own beauty. She is but the framework for the picture, "roses embowering with nought to embower," until man has learned love in his heart and wrought beauty into his life.

Evermore the Kingdom of Beauty is at hand, if only man had eyes to see and a heart to understand. It is at our doors, but we turn the other way—despite the serv-

ice of seers who seek to show us what manner of world it is. A friend of mine in this city, twenty-five years gone by, loved the Father of Waters, musing on its banks on still days and lovely nights.[1] At last the King of the rivers of the earth, finding him to be worthy of its trust, revealed to him a "beauty beyond the power of palette or of pen." He saw its lights and shadows, its pageant of color, the living green of rustling woods and the glint of winding waters—the far-away wistfulness of twilight, and the thoughts and things he had longed to know. Finally he told us in picture and poem what *The Great River* whispered to him in answer to his prayer. He found it responsive, and there was something exquisitely beautiful in his story in color and in song—glimpses of long vistas, echoes of silvery tones in the swaying pine-tops where God had hung His harp.

> The wind goes down the valley,
> And over the mountain leaps,
> But my heart, my heart, forever
> The song of the pine tree keeps.

Beauty must prevail by its own energy and gentle impulse. At last, or soon or late, man will yield to its spell and learn that the beautiful is the useful and the true. Not by edict, not by law, but by the slow growth of the soul of man will the wonder be wrought. Even such instinct for beauty as we have already developed is a foretoken of what life and society will be when the Kingdom of Beauty has come, as it will come when we

[1] Frederich Oakes Sylvester.

join in the wise prayer of Socrates: "O God, make me to become beautiful in the inner man." Then the prayer of the poet will find answer, as he made appeal to man to paint the picture of moral beauty in the frame of Nature, and make his life a poem of revelation:

> Come then, complete incompletion, O come,
> Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
> Breathe but one breath
> Rose-beauty above,
> And all that was death
> Grows life, grows love,
> Grows love!

## § 4

Once at least this prayer was answered, not in a work of art, but in a life of heroic moral loveliness, as fine and pure as it was lofty and strong. The Eternal Reason became flesh and dwelt among us in familiar human shape, and we beheld him moving in beauty and truth. An indescribable grace attended his days, and all that he did, even the simplest act, was done with a certain completeness and charm. No wonder artists have painted the stones over which he walked, and the wayside well by which he sat down to rest, and the flowers that he loved. For in him the elusive spirit of beauty took form and sat at our table, breaking the bread of fellowship, speaking the truth in love.

There is no likeness of Jesus, but it is a sure instinct that leads all artists to paint his face as one of supreme

beauty. When Holman Hunt stole sunbeam and painted *"The Light of the World,"* he gave us one of the noblest works of sacret art. It is Christian experience interpreted in symbol and color, Christ in us the hope of glory revealed with insight and understanding. No one can ever forget that face, which is both awful and pitiful—the face of both a Judge and a Mediator. A great hush and a great hope brood over it. One looks at it with a mingled feeling of wonder and regret—wonder at its majestic loveliness, and regret that so little of that beauty is within our lives.

At last the Life of Jesus must win the life of man by its very beauty. No wonder Ruskin went over England an evangelist of beauty, as Wesley before him had preached Jesus—for the two are one. The most beautiful thing that has been shown us here in these our days and years—fairer than flower, or sunset, or the fairy face of a child—is the vision of God in the life of Jesus. It is the masterpiece of time, the sovereign beauty of the world. It is the ultimate rebuke of all ugliness, all evil, all pessimisms, cynicisms, and skepticisms. Truly "the beauty of the Lord our God" is upon us, confirming faith and consecrating the piteous, passionate, and pathetic life of man.

Let us keep the Sacrament of Beauty. As beauty is a revelation of God, so is it a prophecy of the destiny of man. Man, pursued by Time, overtaken by Death, seems utterly lost, until he is redeemed by the beauty of the Lord his God. The sublime chant of the fleetingness of man—his life as frail as morning flowers—ends

with the benediction of beauty. As God selects the lily to wear his thought of whiteness, and the rose his symbol of sacrifice, and the still frailer haze of drifting cloud to bear his seven-hued promise of hope, so he seals the soul of man, which is like a vapor that melts, with the sign of his eternal beauty that fadeth not away.

Thank God for beauty! The drab and dingy life of man, so far below his right and joy, will be redeemed by it. Ugliness cannot always endure. At last every mother will hold in her arms a Son of God; every common duty will be a revelation of truth; and the mysticism of the night will thinly veil the invisible God from the fields were grain ripens and the hillsides where star-crowned trees keep tryst. Our earth is more than a huge ball of dirt spinning in space. It is embosomed in beauty, and has sacramental meanings. It is the home of the soul, but not its tomb, hallowed by the presence of God under whose persuasions man will yet learn to live in beauty and brotherliness, in vision and praise.

We thank Thee, Lord, for this fair earth,
The glittering sky, the silver sea;
For all their beauty, all their worth,
Their light and glory, come from Thee.

Yet teach us still how far more fair,
More glorious, Father, in Thy sight,
Is one pure deed, one holy prayer,
One heart that owns Thy Spirit's might.

## WHEN WILL CHRISTMAS COME?

Waiting for the sons of God.
*Romans* 8: 19.

Peace! and to all the world! Sure One,
And He the Prince of Peace, hath none!
He travails to be born, and then
Is born to travail more again!
HENRY VAUGHAN (1656).

### § 1

ONLY God could have thought of Christmas. Its beauty is beyond the wit of mortals, so simple in its sublimity, so homey yet so heavenly. On a tapestry woven of stable-straw and starlight it unveils a picture to soften and purify the heart, and to bring us back from a wisdom that is not wise, because it is hard, unholy, and unhopeful. Man would have made it a pageant, its stage directions as follows:

*Array of Great Ones.*
*The Army marches by.*
*Fanfare of trumpets.*
*Enter the* KING.

Our pageants pass and fade, but God works in slower and more secret ways. He blows no trumpet; He rings no bell. He begins within, seeking His ends by quiet growth,

and by a strange power that men call weakness; a wisdom mistaken for folly. Man has one answer to every problem—force; but that is not the way of God. He did not send an army to conquer the world; He sent a Babe to make a woman cry. The divine method is different:

*The crowded Inn.*
*A* MOTHER *and a* BABE.
*No cradle, but a Manger.*
*A man stunned by wonder.*
*A wandering star.*

Such wisdom bends the knee; such beauty breaks the heart—and mends it. It is a scene to sanctify the world, as if to teach us that God enters the life of man by lowly doors, attended by starry ideals and simple shepherd sentiments—"one of the children of the year." They are wise men who bow at such a shrine, linking a far-off pilgrim star with the cradle of a little Child. By such faith men are truly wise, knowing that no hope is too high, no dream is too holy to be fulfilled—even the hope and dream of "peace on earth among men of goodwill."

No wonder it is a scene of mirth and music. As Botticelli sees it, angels are singing on the roof of the inn, and all the world is aglow with a new joy. Dance is mingled with devotion, and laughter with liturgy. Nay, more; he sees a path winding its way to the Manger, and along it we need to return, we who walk thus far down the ways of time, lest we forget the thing which has come to pass.

§ 2

Mayhap, if we take that path, an old faith and a new joy will be born in us, bringing a sense of huge dawns that sleep before us, deep changes and a great hope. For, while we are not hopeless, we are unhopeful of a world Christmas of which the vision tells. Much has happened betimes; war has followed war, woe has been added to woe, and ages of cruelty divide us from that Manger-Cradle under singing skies. Even in our own day a storm of world war has swept over us, leaving a black swirl of wreckage in its wake, until we wonder, in spite of ourselves, whether the vision is not too fair ever to have been true in the past, and too frail ever to come true in the future.

Our faith is dimmed by a cloudy cynicism; our skyey idealism is darkened by blurred bitterness. Ten million young men dead—the fathers of dream-children never now to be born! Such a fact makes even Christmas pensive, and we wear crape on our hearts. Only God can trace the echo of those guns and the ruin they wrought in the lonely places of the soul. Even when we talk of peace, and lay plans to outlaw war, our hearts are haunted by a deep dismay. Men still take the name of Jesus on their lips, but in act they adopt rites befitting the worship of Moloch. The world is a scene of wasted powers, but no waste is so wicked as the waste of child-life. Each age childhood offers us a new beginning, and we have so far failed to break the entail of evil.

Yet the world desires nothing so much as peace; for

nine years we have been groping in search of it in vain. The desire has been pathetic, but we have gone the wrong way to attain it. Every road we have taken has proved only a by-path, leading us to the brink of an abyss. In our misery we have turned back and sought another, only to find ourselves in the same danger and despair. At any rate, the fact has been burned into our minds that it is neither sane nor sensible nor possible for humanity to go on living on a basis of war—and that means much. It has even become a saying among us that we must end war, else war will end us, bringing the house of man down in a charred and smoking ruin. But, alas, words such as these have been said before, and to no avail.

At the end of the struggle with Napoleon, in the years of famine and hatred and woe that followed, a Peace Society was formed. For a time it flourished, and then it faded. Gradually the high resolve in the hearts of men to end war ebbed out. Apathy and inertia ensued. New times brought new men who had not lived through the tragedy and knew not its horror. At last the Peace Society become for many rather a nuisance, for others a bit of a joke. Dark forces gathered; clouds crept over the horizon; old envies, old vanities, old fears, old demands for trade and territory, returned—and again the world was shaken by the thunder of war. Will it be so again? Is it not going on before our very eyes? Is not our symbol a poppy? Will Christmas ever come?

Or must we admit that Christmas is only a fairy story,

heart-woven and dream-spun, and that the gray shadows which life casts over us are the grim truth? Is it no more than a figment of fancy, tender and lovely, fragrant with old memories, enshrined in the love and armored with the wonder of childhood—a day of make-believe tugging at our hearts with the pull of playtime? After all, has the church only made a party for the Christ-child, inviting Puck and Peter Pan and Tiny Tim and dear old Santa Claus each to bring a note of elfin glee, blending all into an eerie anthem with a song of angels long ago? In short, is it an airy unreality, too fragile for a world of feud?

No, Christmas is both a fact and a faith; but even if it were only a brief season of good-will, a holiday from our forgetfulness of others, or just a family festival, it would be welcome. At least it is a day of poetry in the midst of drab days of prose. But, if we have journeyed the path Botticelli saw, other throughts have been laid upon our souls. One little Child—and therefore, by a swift and sure logic, all little children who make the world so young, and keep it so. One who has been to Bethlehem can never lose his reverence for these new lives breaking out of the dark with promise of hope for the race. Nor can he ever cease to wonder at the folly of man, so careful of his material wealth, so careless of his real treasure; and equally at the pity of God.

God abides in a terrible patience
  Unangered, unworn,
And still for the child that was taken
  A child is born.

§ 3

Such facts, faiths, fears, and pities mingle in the mood of our day, so sorely disillusioned. But the tasks of the days ahead ask us to defy dark moods, to rise above misgivings and work the old alchemy of our faith. No one can overestimate the spiritual factor; without it we lose our way in a bottomless bog. It is not enough that high-minded men of state outline a plan of world order and peace. That is necessary. But all their plans and visions must depend for their fruition upon a spiritual life rising out of the heart of the people—a power of faith, a will to creation. Only the very genius of the religious spirit can achieve such vision and power.

Happily, by all the tokens, the tide is turning, and men are taking counsel of deeper needs and finer forces. For one thing, we have seen, in the outworking of ideas and events, that materialism ends in utter futility and chaos. In fact, as in philosophy, it is a proceeding in moral bankruptcy, and the verdict is written in red for all to read. No wonder men turn from it aghast. Fifty years ago men of science were proud to be materialists, but it is not so to-day. They are more nearly mystics, trying to wring a kind of mysticism out of matter, since man must be a mystic if he is to be a man at all, however he may hide the fact. Unless all signs fail, the wistful restlessness of the modern soul, astray in its own life, betokens a return to the eternal mysticism in which man finds faith to live and power to achieve.

By the same token, the feeling is widespread that we must have a new heaven if we are ever to have a new world. In other words, men are everywhere dimly aware that a deeper, more vivid sense of God—nay, experience of God—is the profoundest need of our age. They may not put it so in words, but they know it in their hearts, as they know nothing else. By an awful exegesis of events we have learned that no law, no diplomacy, no device invented by the wit of man, can heal the broken lives and warring wills of men. When all is said, only religion can redeem mankind from the law of the jungle; not religion as an abstraction, still less as a huddle of sects, but religion as a mighty law and principle of being. No archaic orthodoxy, no dainty modernism, is equal to our need. There must be a new dimension of religion, uniting the old vision of faith with the new facts of the world and its laws. Our need is for a religion more direct, and fraternal, with a daring kind of goodness, in which skill is blended with pity and joy.

No doubt it may be said that such a need is nothing new on earth and among men. Nor is Christmas—if it be only a story of long ago, enshrined in legend and enskied in art. But once we see that Christmas is no legend, but a revelation of God in the life of man, it becomes revolutionary, and we know it will come when we are worthy and ready to receive it. Often one feels that we are on the eve of the startling discovery that our religion, to our own astonishment, is actually true, in a way and to a depth which we have never dreamed,

and that to neglect it is for the race to rush down a steep place and perish.

§ 4

Thus one seeks to read, in a swift glimpse, more by hint and divination than by any record, the hidden signs of the time, so to speak, as they lie back of particular items in the program of peace. Our programs are important. It will be of far-reaching import if we make war both a sin in religion and a crime in the public law of the world. More important still, if only because it is less negative, is the effort by contact, by conference, and by the spread of knowledge, to obtain recognition of the fact that the interests and good of humanity as a whole really exist, and that nations are a part of one another, even though it is right that each should aspire to its own ideal.

All the while, to urge it once more, behind all our efforts in behalf of a better mind and mood in the world we need the spiritual impulse and insight. Never more so than to-day, when it is so fatally easy to fall into the cynic mood and say that human nature is human nature, and that we can expect nothing better of it than greed and revenge. For if man is a being in whom God can dwell, as Christmas affirms, if his soul may even be a cradle of the Eternal Love, then our highest social visions have hope of fulfilment. Then, indeed, we have not only a Divine Ally working with us, but also a hidden ally, potential and prophetic, in "the better angels of our nature," to which we do not appeal

in vain. To this faith we must add clarity of thought and charity of heart, and, above all, a new sense of the vast hope that lies hidden in man.

For Christmas is the theology of a civilization yet to be. Like the early Christians, we must live in an air of expectancy, as of something immense impending, of a profound change to take place. For us there have so far been two divisions of time, before Christ and after; and so we reckon our days. But a new division may yet be marked, to which the second period is leading up, as the first led up to the second. At any rate, men of spiritual awareness in all lands feel that a time has come in the history of man when he must take a step into a higher range of being, or else lose and slip back. Stated starkly, to save his life he must reverse the old order of the brute, and assert a diviner law of love, not as a poetic faith, but as the actual basis of his life. So, and only so, can our wounded world be lifted out of the shadow of strife and cruelty into the light of justice and joy.

It can be done. The morning of the world is young, and man is only a step or two on his march to the City of God. His future, even if measured by his past, is unimaginable; but the past is no test of what he can be and will be. Already he has found new powers and dominions to which we can set no limit, and to-day he is peeping on tiptoe through a keyhole into unguessed regions yet to be explored. As he has discovered new potencies in nature, new elements, new distances, so in the realm of spiritual reality he will unlock new depths,

and order his life by a diviner law. Soon or late he will live in a frontierless and unfortified world, ruled by moral intelligence and practical good-will. The Christian era lies ahead of us.

§ 5

In this fact is to be found the answer to the questions that bewilder us betimes. Why do we live for one day by the law of love and then turn again and rend each other? Wherefore do nations at war lift up hands in prayer to him who taught us to love our enemies? Why do men who deny Christ yield, for one day, to the spell of his spirit of pity and joy? Is there any explanation of such a deficit between dream and deed? Yes. It lies in the fact that Christmas is a prophetic day, looking not so much backward as forward. It is a history of the future, or an order of life not yet attained, of a religion not yet realized. To our dull eyes it seems visionary; to God it is vision.

Over an armed camp, in a hard old Roman world, the song of the angels rang out, proclaiming "Peace on earth among men of good-will." How far off it must have seemed on that night! How far off it seems to-day! Yet it will come true. It is not a myth; it is not a mockery. Surviving ages of slaughter, it still haunts us, proving its immortality. It is not a mortal melody, but a divine symphony. Because it is far off we know that it is not our own music, but was sent into the soul of man by one who is as far above us as the stars are above the mists.

It is a song out of the heart of the world. It means much that we can hear it, despite gray fears and grim facts, forever singing above a din of strife; and, hearing it, take up its strain in a world of feud. Not in our day, not in many days, perhaps, but at last it will be fulfilled. The world will fill up with men of good-will who keep step to its music and live by its law—men who know that man was made for love, because God is love, and that love and joy will blend in the final note of the great world-song.

## THE GOSPEL OF MARY

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

*Luke* 2: 19.

About the story of the birth of Jesus there is a grace of insight and art which sets it apart from other such records. What delicacy is here, what noble reticence in the presence of the mysteries of life, giving us a glimpse into the hinterland of the supreme Personality! Its authenticity is attested by its refinement no less than by its loveliness; and it is not too much to say that no other record has done more to soften and purify the heart of man. It is a white flag of purity floating over a foul world, a verity to exalt and a vision to redeem.

What a pity it is that the home of Jesus should have been invaded by angry debate, and often in a spirit alien to its peace! With such issues I have not to do, except to try to see through them and discover what lies behind. A series of questions will bring the whole matter before us, after this manner: Why did the phrase, "born of the Virgin Mary," find a place in the ancient formula of faith? What is the place and import of the story in the record and teaching of the New Testament? Who is authority for the account as we have it? What

is it trying to tell us for our instruction and inspiration? And, finally, how shall we interpret it to the life and mind of our age?

The first question is easily answered, if we remember that almost from the first there existed a school of thought, not yet extinct, which held that Jesus was not a human reality, but a kind of sacred specter, a holy phantom, a divine wraith haunting the scene of human life. It need not be said that such a philosophy emptied the life of Jesus of all actuality, making its scenes and acts a phantasmagoria. Its human color melted into myth, allegory, symbol. Over against this all-blurring mysticism, in behalf of the real humanity of Jesus, the church affirmed that he was "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." Such phrases, flashing out of the mist, declared the life of Jesus to be a matter of history, not a celestial apparition.

It is of no use to raise the question of miracles, if only because no one knows what the word means, much less what the thing itself is. Mystery? Assuredly; all is mystery as of course, and man needs for his sanity of mind, no less than for his health of heart, both a law to obey and a mystery in which to grow. But the crux of the matter lies in the question: *What is the real mystery of Jesus?* Does it lie in his physical history, or in the spiritual splendor that shone in his bosom, transfiguring all life and making its dark mystery merciful? Surely the wonder of the life of Jesus was that he lived what others in their highest moments only feel, or dimly see

in moods of immaculate perception—that God became incandescent in him as in no other, more vividly and more lucidly. Here is a fact no one denies; a mystery the law of which we do not yet know, but we dare not rest until we find it.

My own faith is that God, the transcendent, is in this universe always and everywhere, His will its law, His character its integrity, His presence its consecration. What we call Nature is the organized will of God, its laws His habits, its forces His swift couriers. That is to say, God is supernatural, but He works in orderly ways, creating by growth, and fulfilling His purpose in time. So, instead of a few miracles in ancient days, we live in the marvel of a universe upheld, guided, and glorified by the creative power of the living God. All life, all birth, all physical existence, all spiritual experience, are supernatural, in the sense that they are derived from God Himself, without whose ever-sustaining power darkness would descend upon us. In such a setting—interpreting life sacramentally—some of us read the Life of Jesus, in which the Divine Life is a revealing rhythm and a redeeming radiance, its wonder one with "the growing clover and the falling rain."

When we open the Gospel record, we learn that Jesus did not refer to his origin at all, except to say that he came from God to do His will. The story of the Virgin Birth is told by others, and it is as thrilling as it is puzzling. Only two of the Gospels speak of it; Matthew briefly, and Luke fully, to an accompaniment of chanting prophecy and melodious skies. St. Peter, both in

his preaching and in his letters, passed it by. St. John, who lays so much stress upon the divine sonship and preëxistence of Jesus, does not allude to the Virgin Birth. Nor does St. Paul, who really shaped the thought of the church, so much as mention it, though it would have fitted into his exposition of the person of Christ. Howbeit, his silence may be due to the fact that he did not deal with "Christ according to the flesh," but with the living, reigning Lord.

Such facts have led some to hold that the story of the Virgin Birth was a legend added to the record at a later time. Not so. The record is none the less valid because the story is told by only two of the evangelists. To argue otherwise is to tear the Gospels to tatters, leaving each one free to take what suits his whim or fancy; and the result is chaos. But the place of the story in the record does show that faith in the Virgin Birth of Jesus was not deemed fundamental to Christian faith. Else it would not have been left in the penumbra, as the New Testament leaves it. At any rate, no one in the early church ever thought of making faith in the Virgin Birth of Jesus a test of fellowship. In our time some of the noblest disciples of Jesus do not accept the Virgin Birth as literal, physical fact, because, as they hold, it would mean an incomplete incarnation. Thus, in behalf of a full faith in very God in very man, they hold the story as in some sense detachable from the record, or else as an interpretation of it.

Let us rather ask what the story is trying to tell us, and the answer to that question is found in the answer

to another: Who is authority for the record as it stands? Manifestly we owe it to the Mother of Jesus herself! From no one else could St. Luke have learned the story as he recorded it. Aside from the tradition that Luke knew the Mother of Jesus, and even painted her portrait, who else could have told the story, setting it against a background of poetry and prophecy? To some of us the story or the Virgin Birth is the interpretation by the Mother of Jesus of her own experience when, at last, she saw and understood. Was she mistaken? No, indeed. Her insight was as straight as a line of light, and profounder, it may be, than she herself was aware; profounder, in fact, than we have yet dreamed. So, then, the old, ineffable story, told with such exquisite art, about which so much music and poetry cluster, is the Gospel of the Mother of Jesus!

No part of the Gospel record is more pathetic, more poignant, more heroic than the story of the Mother of Jesus. She was no ordinary woman, as the poem she left us attests. Steeped in the passion and prophecy of her people, she dreamed that she might be the mother of the Messiah, as many a pious Jewish girl did. If visions and visitations attended her dawning motherhood, the years following tried her faith tragically. She did not understand her Son. Let us not chide her, since we too find him a mystery beyond our fathoming. His brothers did not understand him. Nor did they believe in him, apparently, until after his death. There is a page in the Gospel of Mark too sad to have been invented, telling how the family, hearing of his thronged and crowded

life, went out to lay hold of him; for, they said, "he is beside himself." They thought him insane, and Mary was among them! Pathos could hardly go further. What was going on in the soul of Mary in those days no words may ever hope to tell. As the shadow of opposition to him deepened, her sorrow deepened, until she stood at last, a forlorn figure, at the Cross. What must have been in her heart as she heard the news of the first Easter day! At last she understood, believed, and became a member of the Church of Jesus, humbly trustful of his truth, devoutly obedient to his spirit.

Always it is through memory that the meaning of things is revealed. Toward the end, looking back upon her experience, Mary sought to interpret it. The most amazing Being our earth has known had come into the world through her. How could it be so? What did it mean? Think of the mother of Shakspere trying to account for his genius, and we have a dim idea of the problem over which Mary pondered. For Jesus was not simply another man; he was a new kind of man, prophetic of a higher order of humanity. The life of Jesus was to our human world what the passing from the inorganic to the organic was in the history of our planet. He gave a new depth, dimension, and meaning to our human life, dividing time into before and after. Here is no fancy; the facts prove it, alike in our spiritual history and our secular calender.

The Mother of Jesus, in her old age, kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. As she thought of the character and personality of Jesus, the revelation of

God in his life, and the influences liberated by his soul, she knew that she had been a handmaiden of God: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Frankly, if we take into account all the facts and values involved, one does not see how else Mary could have described Jesus, much less interpreted his origin. It was his spiritual origin that baffled her, as it does us. If you had to describe that high, ineffable reality, how would you do it? Try as you will, there is no better way than in the record as we have it, luminous in its understanding, too lovely to have been invented, and too profound to have been dreamed. The church set it forth in an august phrase, "conceived by the Holy Ghost," and it is true.

Now, consider. They err who think that this story tells of an isolated fact in the olden time, and has no meaning for us. Unless we have the faith to follow where the vision of Mary leads, and see the living Spirit of God present everywhere, in the processes of every birth, we miss its real import. Aye, here is a ray of white light in our darkness, if we have eyes to see. No message of the Gospel record—save the redeeming truth of Jesus himself—has a profounder meaning for our humanity than the message of the Mother of Jesus. If we have ears to hear, it will disinfect the fountains of life, exalt the home, and transfigure with spiritual beauty and sanctity what else is so easily debased, or accepted as a crude physical fact. Nothing do we need more to-

day than a new philosophy—nay, a new vision and interpretation—of sex, which is one of the mightiest facts of life. Here it is, once we understand it, taught us, appropriately and with delicate insight, by the Mother of Jesus. Yet, oddly enough, in all the debates about the birth of Jesus, I have heard no word about it! How can spiritual teachers be so blind to spiritual realities?

Chesterton will help me to make this matter vivid. Think, he tells us, of a garden, of the tender associations called up by it, memories of innocent romances, of happy meetings and melancholy partings. If it is an English garden, it is almost sure to have a sun-dial, or a fountain, and flowers of many colors. Then, let any one who knows a little Latin poetry recall suddenly what would have stood in a Roman garden in place of the sun-dial or the fountain, in the days when Mary lived—a thing too monstrous to be described! It was a symbol of the hard, filthy animalism of the age which, in its perversions, sank into the depths, and stained even the flowers and the stars with lustful poetry and lascivious song. It was in such a world that the Mother of Jesus stood forth, a white and shining figure, the keeper of a spiritual treasure, the maker of a holy tradition—the legacy of her life a vision of the sanctity of birth and the life of God in a Babe. Until the Gospel of the Mother of Jesus is in some degree fulfilled, the Gospel of Jesus will never win its way.

No wonder men worshipped Mary, and the homage paid to her is an honor to humanity. To any one who knows anything of actual life, and the searing, scorch-

ing passions that sweep through it, blasting its beauty, it is not strange that men should cry out, "Mother of God, have mercy on us." What a ministry of purity to an impure and tormented humanity, and how in accord with the fitness of things that the Mother of Jesus should have rendered it! Her modesty, her gentleness, her purity, and her faith have shone as stars in a murky, beclouded world, in which even art is so often the servant of sensualism. How much her Gospel is needed to-day in any modern city, with its finance, its fashion, its garish glitter and gilded lust. No day passes but the press lifts the veil and lets us see, as in a flash, the depths of sin and shame round about us.

Yet the church is torn in debate over the birth of Jesus, whether he had one parent or two! It makes one think of the words of Carlyle: "The world asks of its Church in these times, more passionately than of any other institution, the question—Canst thou teach us or not?" In face of the appalling irruption of vulgarity and debasement of morals in the wake of the war, flooding us with a cheap and flippant cynicism, and emptying the gutter into our fiction and the brothel on the stage—surely we need a Crusade for Purity in the name of the Mother of Jesus. For, to say no more, now as of old our hope lies in the rebirth of the Divine in humanity, as in the motherhood of Mary—the living purity and holy love to which simple shepherds and learned Magi alike paid homage.

## THE INN OF YEAR'S END

Ye have not passed this way heretofore.
*Joshua* 3:4.

In the poetry of all peoples, as far back as we can go, life is a journey and man is a traveler. These old images of speech are like the vases dug up from the Pyramids, carved with exquisite care, telling us what those who went before us found life to be. Pilgrims we are, members of a pilgrim race, and each of the Seven Ages is neighbor to the rest, like the Canterbury Pilgrims of whom Chaucer wrote, travelers telling tales to beguile the tedium of the journey. It is a long road on which we journey together; but there are Inns along the way, kept by Father Time, in which we may take lodging for the night, and rest and reflect—like the Inn of Year's End, where we arrive to-day, in which there are cakes and ale, a merry company, and much talk of the meaning of the journey and the incidents along the way.

Ten years ago a great editor, now fallen asleep, sent me this greeting at New Year: "Here is hoping that in the New Year there will be nothing the matter with you that money cannot cure. For the rest, the law and prophets contain no word of better rule than this: Hope thou a little, fear not at all, and love as much as you can."

To make his wisdom complete, he added these lines from an unpublished manuscript of Stevenson, who was a good traveler and the best of company:

> Away with funeral music—set
> The pipe to powerful lips—
> The cup of life's for him that drinks,
> And not for him that sips.

It was a wise wish, since the things which money cannot cure are the ills of the spirit, the sickness of the heart, and the dreary dull pain of waiting for those who return no more. There are hungers which gold cannot satisfy, and blinding storms from which it offers no shelter. Thus bravely, blithely, and with a gallant spirit my vanished friend sent me a heartful of good-will, as we gathered in the friendly Inn of Year's End.

Yes, man is a traveler, and the winding road is ever the symbol of his life. Once we are aware of ourselves as pilgrims on a journey, then the people and the scenes about us reveal their real meaning and charm. Indeed, if we forget that life is a Pilgrim's Progress, we have no clue at all to an understanding of it. For, strangely enough, when we settle down to be citizens of this world, the world itself becomes an enigma and a riddle. By the same token, the great leaders and interpreters of life are the men in whom the sense of being pilgrims and strangers in the earth is the most vivid. It is the sojourners in the world, the manifest travelers to a Better Country, who get the most out of life, because they

never forget the adventure of faith and crusade of love. They quicken the divine wanderlust in the souls of us, keeping us from trying to build houses of granite when we only have time to pitch a tent. They are the great toilers too, since they know that they must work while it is day, ere the night cometh when no man can work. In the kindly air of the Inn of Year's End, where men make merry for a night, there is much congratulation upon so much of the journey safely done, and much well-wishing for the way that lies ahead. Also, there is no end of complaint—folk telling of aches, ills, upsets and downfalls. All kinds of faiths and philosophies mingle, and there is no agreement as to the meaning or the goal of the journey. Some think it is a great adventure, and others hold it to be a nuisance. Often one feels that it takes half of the race to keep the other half reconciled to the road. Some time ago I read a little *Book of Wisdom* gleaned from the sayings of sages, and it struck me how few had anything good to say about life. Not a few agreed with the epitaph of the poet Gay in Westminster Abbey:

> Life is a jest, and all things show it
> I thought so once, and now I know it.

Many have thought it a rather bitter jest, as if Fate were toying with us, making sport of our frailty. But if it is a jest, whose jest is it? Only a few accept life as a great gift, a divine opportunity, a capacity for heroic endeavor. Most men endure life rather than enjoy it, and

only rare souls accept it in triumph, as Meredith did in the words, now to be read in the open marble book on top of the modest slab which marks his grave:

> Life is but a little holding,
> Lent to do a mighty labor.

Howbeit, all must agree that it simplifies life to know that we are a pilgrim world. When a man starts on a journey he does not take everything with him, but only such things as he really needs. Life is thus largely a matter of discrimination and transportation. To know what to take and what to leave, is one of the finest of arts. It asks for insight, judgment, and a sense of values, and we may well take counsel of the wisest minds. One reason why the race moves so slowly is that it tries to carry too much with it, weighing itself down with old creeds, customs, and no end of useless rubbish which ought to be thrown aside. Much worthless luggage is carted over the hills and valleys of the years, hindering the advance of humanity. Dogma, said Phillips Brooks, is truth packed for transportation. No doubt; but since we need the truth every day, why pack an old dogma and carry it along? It is so in other things. Thoreau was amazed when he saw men staggering along the road with acres of land on their backs, and houses and bags of money. No wonder they are weary. Others carry old hates, old grudges, old disappointments, which wear down their strength for nothing. At the end of the year it is wise to unpack our bundle and sort out the things

we do not need—throwing the litter out the window and over the wall.

How much does a man need for his journey? If the wisdom of the ages may be believed, the things we actually need are very few, but they are very great. "There abideth Faith, Hope, and Love, these three; and the greatest of these is Love." To which let us add Courage, the root of every virtue, without which life is either too tame or too terrifying to endure. Wisdom is not enough; a man may have a pocketful of proverbs, but he will lose his way unless, like the Psalmist, he trusts God and makes His laws his songs in the house of his pilgrimage. In a world where the way is often dim, the road rough, and the weather stormy, we have time only for Love, and Hate is the sin of sins. After all, said Michael Fairless, who walked "the Road of the Loving Heart," and ran ahead of us over the hill and out of sight, leaving a golden little book, *The Roadmender*—a manual of daring faith and the wisdom of love:

> After all, what do we ask of life, here or indeed hereafter, but leave to serve, to live, to commune with our fellowmen and with ourselves; and from the lap of earth to look up into the face of God? I have learned to understand, dimly, the blessing of a curse, the voice of silence, and the companionship of solitude; and so take my leave of this bit of the road and of you who have fared with me. Farewell! It is a Roadmender's word: I cry you Godspeed to the next milestone—and beyond!

The human procession is endlessly fascinating. It is thronged with figures quaint, fantastic, heroic, ignoble,

joyous, sorrowful, ridiculous, pathetic, some marching, some straggling, all wending their way through time. There are Great-Hearts who patrol the road, and skulkers who shirk danger and wander to no purpose; and often we walk with angels unawares. What is the mark whereby we may recognize an angel? asked a mystic of the olden time. He answered his own question by saying that angels may be known by their gracious way of continually saying, "Fear not!" That is, they are always encouragers, and there is nothing our humanity needs more than angels of good cheer. All of us have had chance companions on a journey whom we can never forget, and whom we should love to meet again. Then there are others less admirable, like the tramp I met once in a Western village who lived without aim or obligation—yet with something in him to arrest and amuse. When I asked him if he was a traveler, this is what I heard:

"Yep, headed South this trip; Memphis mebbe, if I don't lay off sooner. I suppose I'm what you call a bum, pardner, but I ain't so bad as some of 'em. Yes, I've been hitting the road for a good while, nigh forty years; but I hold a feller has the right to live the way he wants to as long as he lets other folks alone. No, I haven't any people. That's one reason why I took up this way of livin'. But, see here, I ain't complainin'. I've had a heap more fun than most of 'em. No, I don't booze, at least not lately. I've learned more sense than that. Oh, yes, I might have settled down and got mar-

ried and raised a lot of kids that I couldn't care for, same as a lot of fellers; but I didn't, and I'm glad I didn't. Pardner, I've been good to my family by not gettin' them into the game. They say kids come from heaven, and I just thought I'd let mine stay there. It keeps me hustlin' to look after myself, and handin' out a bit here and there to some feller down on his luck. Well, so-long, pardner: I hope we'll be meetin' again sometime, but it ain't likely. This world's a pretty big place, but we'll all get through it somehow, don't you reckon?"

Alas, there are many such, more than we imagine, not alone those who flip trains and frequent soup-houses. There are intellectual bums, spiritual tramps, moral parasites who are as aimless and indifferent in regard to the great obligations of life as that wandering loafer. How often one is reminded of that wise essay by an English country parson, named Boyd—"Alphabet Boyd" they used to call him, because he had so many initials—entitled "Concerning People of Whom More Might Have Been Made." So few make the most of themselves. Hardly any of us, indeed, are what we were designed to be. Why should it be so? Why so much promise, and so little fulfilment? Why did the man with one talent go and hide it? The answer lies in those words, which might be an epitaph for most of our race: "I was afraid!" Fear of life, fear of death, fear of things that never can be, holds us back from being what we can be, what we were meant to be. Most of us are qualified

for the leading role in the Gorky story, *The Man Who Was Afraid.* Yet there is nothing to be afraid of, unless it is the very fear that robs life of its glory, darkening our days and dwarfing our powers.

There lies the value of religion, the meaning and strategy of which a wise teacher has summed up after this manner. In every man, in every woman, there is a white-faced coward and a star-eyed hero; they are always at war, and what is sense to one is nonsense to the other. Everything the hero proposes is foolishness to the coward, with whom even God can do nothing at all—except frighten him out of his wits. "Religion is the power which develops the hero in the man at the expense of the coward." At last there comes a day when the coward, with his eye on safety, no longer rules the soul, and that is the day of the feast of life. The hero awakes and looks longingly toward the mountain-tops, no longer fettered to the self-center; and the wings, which Plato said are native to the souls, are spread for flight. Call it conversion, call it what you will, that is the real birthday of the soul—its discovery that though it fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, God is there, as He is everywhere, and everywhere blessed.

When we remember that we are pilgrims seeking a city, we can the better interpret the ills that befall us and the troubles that overtake us along the way. Most of us, however, are poor travelers. Like the people of the Bible, we murmur "because of the way," forgetting that one must put up with a great deal on a journey which would be intolerable at home, and that our griefs

are but the incidents and accidents of the road. Our duties, too, are made plain. The Good Samaritan had never met the man whom he befriended on the road to Jericho. He probably did not know his name. As they were of different races, he may have had difficulty in understanding his language. None the less, he ministered to his need, took him to the next inn, paid for his keep, and agreed to pay more if required. He found his duty by the roadside in the ordinary course of his labors; he did it and went on his way. Such is the spirit and chivalry of the old-worn human road, wherein if a man walk faithfully he will come to the White Gate of the House of God. Wesley was a mighty pilgrim, and he has told us that, since we pass this way but once, we ought to do all the good we can, in all ways we can, to all the people we can. Nothing else really matters, and it makes the joy of these short days of sun and frost.

How many times we have been asked the question by some fellow-traveler, How far are you going? It is a natural question, but always when it is asked me there come thoughts of those who walked with me in other days, and have vanished. They were lovely and true, their fellowship was sweet, and the way has been lonely since they went away. Toward the end life is like the Appian Way—a street of tombs—as one by one those who journey with us fall asleep. What we need is One who is going all the way. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, "Lo, I am with you all the way, even to the end of the world." He is going all the

way, he knows the way, he is the way; and I beseech you to make friends with him—yea, make him the Lord and Leader of your life, that so you may not lose your way amid the fluctuating shadows of this mortal world, nor be bereft of companions when those you love fall asleep. Then you will not be left alone when you come at last, as come you must, to where the winding road, worn by so many feet, dips down into the Valley of Shadows.

Awesome it is to think of this spiritual essence of us, this unseen entity we call the soul, with its treasures of faith and hope and love, and its "thoughts that wander through eternity." The soul, too, is a pilgrim, and must pass on. Wedded for a brief time to a vesture of clay, it walks lightly or sadly along the great highway, and then betakes itself on an unknown journey. It is strange, a door opens, and the pilgrim soul, set free, makes the great adventure where no path is, following a multitude of those gone before. Have no fear; He who made us pilgrims here will not forsake us, and the way He knoweth. No blind and aimless way the spirit goeth, but to Him who hath set eternity in our hearts and taught us to dream of the eternal life in the midst of time. Such thoughts visit us, such undying faiths and hopes cheer us, gathered in the Inn of Year's End, where we take lodging for the night.

I go mine, thou goest thine;
Many ways we wend,
Many ways and many days,
Ending in one end.

Many a wrong its crowning song,
  Many a road and many an Inn;
Far to roam, but only one home
  For all the world to win.

## THE GREAT GAME

Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting and playing in the markets.

*Matthew* 11: 16.

HERE is a picture for an artist to paint—a group of Oriental children playing in the market, their hot faces, their eager gestures, their shrill cries of joy, and Jesus watching near-by. There has been a falling out, some are sulking, and the others are trying to win them back to the game. First they mimic a wedding march, with song and dance and merrymaking; but that fails. Then they pass by imitating a funeral procession, beating their little breasts and crying aloud, like the mourners they had seen; but that failed too. Now it was a dance, now a dirge, and the little actors played their parts, the while the gentle Master watched and learned a new parable.

Just so it was, said the wise Teacher, with the men of that age in respect of the supreme concerns of life. John came preaching his mighty gospel of repentance and righteousness, but they said that he was too grim, austere, and ascetic. Besides he lived aloof from man, a citizen of the wilderness. Jesus came teaching his religion of love and fellowship, mingling with men, healing the poor and disinherited, and they said he was not

serious enough. They even called him a glutton and a wine-bibber, and not altogether respectable. Captious, fastidious, capricious, what they disliked was not the austerity of John, nor the sunny tenderness of Jesus, but the divine urgency that surged up in both. As Jesus said, with them it was all a game; that was what their religious interest amounted to; which may serve as a theme for the hour—the game of religion, and the religion of the game.

§ 1

The imitative, imaginative child has been drawn once for all by Wordsworth, who no doubt had this scene from the life of Jesus in mind. Take him, says the poet, at the age of six, and he is a mimic of reality, a lover of display, living in make-believe, care-free and irresponsible, at his feet some plan or toy, some fragment of his dream of human life, shaped by himself with newly learned art:

> A wedding or a festival,
> A mourning or a funeral,
> And this hath now his heart,
> And unto this he frames his song;
> But it will not be long
> Ere this be thrown aside,
> And with new joy and pride
> The little actor cons another part,
> As if his whole vocation
> Were endless imitation.

What is natural and pretty in a child, however, becomes a foolishness in a man, who should put away

childish things. Make-believe is not the staple of manhood, and fickle trifling is out of place in the market where serious affairs of life and death are afoot. Yet such was the temper of the Galileans, as Jesus saw them, superficial, living on the outside of things, childish in their refusal to commit themselves to the great concerns of religion. With which agrees the verdict of Josephus, who described them as irrational lovers of glitter and show, inconsequent. Light half-believers of their casual creed, all they seemed fitted to do was to play at religion or with it, amusing themselves with some form of it, grave or sunny as the mood altered, but never letting their hearts be caught up into the full rush of a great conviction.

Unfortunately, the Galilean type of mind we have always with us. What such persons dislike in a majority of cases is not one form of religion as against another; it is religion itself. Vital religion embarrasses them. They try to escape it by finding fault with religious people, or by raising objections, more or less specious, to this or that feature of a religious movement or method, the better to deflect its appeal. This form is too sensational, that too staid; one church is too narrow, another too lax; this creed is too literal, that too liberal. Contact with religion they cannot avoid, but something can always be said against some leader or adherent of faith, petulant no doubt, to justify their aloofness. When they can no longer be critics of religion, they pose as its ardent friends, but they fix on its accidentals instead of penetrating to the living secret and center. Catch-

words are soon learned; the trick of ritual is easily acquired. Always they reduce it to a game, with nothing long or strong about it, but a part to be conned and put aside.

Sentimental indulgence becomes a kind of subtle game, as Cardinal Manning saw when he said that the three perils of the Roman Church were French devotional books, theatrical music, and the pulpit orator. Such a preacher appreciates the Gospel esthetically; he knows how to use religious sentiments or moral terrors to play upon the feelings of an audience. And the audience like to be rippled on the surface, so long as he avoids that searching and humbling discipline which is the forerunner of vital change. Meredith defined sentimentalism as enjoyment without obligation. It loves feeling for the sake of feeling, and mistakes the self-gratification of religious emotions for moral passions and spiritual intensity. Playing with the great realities of faith, it keeps the will and conscience carefully out of reach, and too often deems the performance of a rite a substitute for righteousness or an atonement for unrighteousness. Responsibility is avoided. Obligation is gracefully shunned. Such men will do anything for Christ, admire him, praise him, discuss him—anything except commit themselves to him and obey his law. For we can discuss a principle or admire a character which we have not the remotest intention of adopting in life. Thus the spirit of Jesus, with its sweetness and earnestness, is made to be of no effect by our insincere dealing with it and with ourselves, as it was in the days of his

flesh. Now as then, Christ is here on business. Vital issues are at stake. Seen in the light of his Gospel, life is a place where earnest labor is astir, and where man is meant to come into contact with God decisively, creatively. Any trifling on our part is an impertinence, a mark of moral childishness, however that trifling may be guised in forms which have a colorable appearance of Christianity itself. These high matters demand a seriousness of mind and heart for which our modern life provides, alas, too many counterfeits. Children playing in the market-place! Oh, the paradox of it! Censorious, superficial, insincere, by our dishonest handling we make a game of life and death and the judgment to come!

§ 2

Let us now consider the moral value and spiritual meaning of the spirit of sport, which has so large a place in the life of man. Time out of mind, from the very beginning and in all lands and ages, men have loved games of all sorts. Surely we have not enough considered what this great instinct may teach us of the deeper things of life and faith. What makes the fascination of a game? Every game has its rules. It requires skill. It diverts attention and brings release from care. But the real secret of the game is its uncertainty, its marge of mystery, its incalculable element, its elusive spirit of luck. Just so it is in life, where it is the unexpected that so often happens and whose unpredictable element gives such risk, adventure, and zest. What wonder then that,

from the first, men have been wont to think of life as a game, as when Huxley said:

> The life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and more or less of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The Player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient, and that he would always rather that we won than lost. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for our ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

So interpreted, the game becomes a philosophy, and if we are not able to accept this reading of it in all its details, we must admit that it has many facts on its side. Unless we have faith that the hidden Player is playing for love, the game will seem not only unevenly matched, but actually cruel, since we in our ignorance know so little of the rules. Everything depends on the character of the Player on the other side. If we think of life as a game of chance, as the Greeks did, in which man is the sport of whimsical Fate, it is no game at all; it is a tragedy. By the same token, if we think of God as a kind of Good Fellow who is indifferent to our mis-

takes and will make it all right anyway, as Omar taught, it is no real game, but a mere pastime. Between these two extremes lies the deep and beautiful truth that life is indeed a game, but a game of Love in which the hiddden Player is revealing Himself even in His austerity, and teaching us that we can only win by playing fairly and according to the rules of the moral life —and, since it is a game of love, when He wins we win also.

In a little play, entitled *The Showing-up of Blanco Posnet*—which he admits in his preface is "really a religious tract in dramatic form"—Bernard Shaw brings us near the truth. It is built upon "that human heart by which we live," telling how a hard-boiled man of the wild West "went soft" at the touch of baby fingers. A horse has been stolen, and Blanco Posnet has been apprehended as the thief. The evidence is not very strong, and even in that tough town the sheriff has his misgivings. However, the men of the place have so little to do that a "hanging" is an incident which they do not like to lose. They set about getting evidence, and they secure as a witness one Feemy Evans, a kind of camp-follower who has no difficulty in perjuring himself. At the crisis everything is upset, unaccountably, as if God has taken a hand in it, leaving Blanco puzzled and pondering: "Why did I go soft? Why did the sheriff go soft? Why did Feemy go soft? What's the game that upsets our game? It seems to me there's two games being played. One game is a rotten game, that makes me feel I'm dirt. T'other may be a silly game, but it ain't

rotten. Gents, there's a rotten game and there's a great game. I played the rotten game, but the Great Game was played on me; and now I'm for the great game every time." It makes one think of a striking passage by William James, in *The Will To Believe*—so striking that one may be pardoned for quoting it too:

> Suppose two men before a chess-board, the one a novice, the other an expert player of the game. The expert intends to beat. But he cannot foresee exactly what any one actual move of his adversary may be. He knows, however, all the *possible* moves of the latter; and he knows in advance how to meet each of them by a move of his own which leads in the direction of victory. And the victory infallibly arrives, after no matter how devious a course, in the one predestined form of a checkmate to the novice's king.

No doubt this was what Emerson meant when he said that "the dice of God are loaded." Men discover this truth amid tragedy and woe, but they miss the meaning of it—forgetting that it is the love of God that will not let us win when we play dishonestly or meanly. Oscar Wilde spoke the bitter truth, confirmed by ages of sad experience, when he said in one of the greatest poems of recent years:

> And once, or twice, to throw the dice
> Is a gentlemanly game,
> But he does not win who plays with Sin
> In the Secret House of Shame.

Nevertheless, in spite of ages of certain defeat, men will still take the chance of a gambler and try to outwit the

awful law of God. Surely it is sheer folly to fancy, in face of the immemorial fact, that we are wise enough to play the game of sin and win. If the experience of humanity has taught us anything it is that unrighteousness is bad sportsmanship, as well as bad morals.

§ 3

How much the spirit of the game has to do with the moral life is shown in that brilliant story called *The Sporting Instinct*, by Martin Swayne— a book in a thousand, light of touch, clever, sparkling, witty and wise, rich in delicious epigram, and aglow with titillating by-play of words. It shows a financial reverse and how a family met it, some with sullen dolor, some in the spirit of sport, that is, bravely, generously, and with high daring of heart. There is much to think about in these words:

"She will never do such a thing," said one of the characters in speaking of a certain woman in the story.

"What is to prevent her?" asks another.

"A sporting instinct—a thing which prevents us more than anything else from doing things like that," was the reply.

Now that sporting instinct, so cleverly analyzed by the writer of the story, is very real, unique, and of the very essence of brave and noble living. When we fail, as we often do, to obey its promptings, we know that we are acting unfairly, unwisely, meanly; and however well equipped we may be with armor of deception, at heart

we are ashamed. We do not quibble and discuss nicely balanced questions of ethics, we neither ask ourselves nor give others reasons, we know instinctively when we are "playing the game"—a phrase which often hides a certain humane and generous brutality, as charming as it is dangerous, but which, none the less, has a robust idealism at the root of it. Especially is this true of the men of America to whom life is what Kim called it, a Great Game. They go down town to the work of the day and call it "playing the game"; they work as hard as they can to "get into the game," and as long as they can to "stay in the game," with a courage that arises anew from defeat and refuses to give up to despair.

Such a spirit, did we but know it, is one of the central treasures of the moral life and fits us to meet our spiritual enemies. Some of you know the story of the "Catch-My-Pal" movement which started in one of the drunken districts of Ireland and swept it free from drink in a brief time. For years the town of Armagh was the despair of religious workers. Neither Protestants nor Catholics could restrain its intemperance. One day a young man appeared in the village and preached a sermon on how "Christ caught Andrew, and Andrew caught Peter," and by appeal to the play-instinct achieved instant victory in a territory which until then had been given over to drunken revelings. Hence the Catch-My-Pal movement, in which each one won from the devil of drink became a winner of another, and the sporting instinct wrought what all other influences failed to do. Of course, we need more religion in our sport, dedicating our play

to God, as the Greeks did when they made their Olympian games a part of their religious festival. But, equally, we need more of the spirit of sport in our religion, if only to learn how to unite the will to fellowship with the will to rivalry. For in sport, at its best, we have contest without conflict, and rivalry without rancor, in which the loser is the first to pay honor to the winner.

Truly the conception of life as a game, when we inquire into it, discloses a philosophy, a faith, noble in its brave and adventurous spirit, whole-hearted in its acceptance of life, and generous in its judgments. It suggests a certain code of comradeship, an attitude of buoyant hopefulness, a willingness to take the risk and peril of human things with good cheer, and a fine contempt for the base and unfair. Even the saints were wont to think of life as a game, so joyous were they, so radiant and happy of heart. "It is a game of chess," said St. Teresa, "in which Humility is the Queen without whom none can checkmate the Divine King." From Catherine of Siena to Madam Guyon they call the life of faith the Ludus Amoris, the Game of Love, which God plays with the soul, withdrawing himself the better to lure us to follow and find Him amid the shadows of life. Francis Thompson was true to the sweet tradition of the saints when he wrote his lines so full of the deep paradoxes of the life of the spirit:

> Gird, and thou shalt unbind;
> Seek not, and thou shalt find;
> To eat
> Deny thy meat;

And thou shalt be fulfilled
With all sweet things unwilled;
So best
God loves to jest
With children small—a freak
Of heavenly hide-and-seek
Fit
For thy wayward wit
Who art thyself a thing
Of whim and wavering;
Free
When his wings pen thee.

## THE POWER OF SPIRIT

He is not here; he is risen.

*Luke* 24: 6.

Behold, I am alive for evermore.

*Revelation* 1: 18.

ONCE again, borne on that tide of Eternity which men call Time, we have come to the great day of memory and hope. That a day in spring should be set apart to commemorate the ever-renewed hope of the Life Everlasting is in accord with the fitness of things, as if the seasons of the soul were attuned to the seasons of the year. It is more than beautiful; it unites faith with life, linking the fresh buds of returning spring with the ancient poetries and pieties of the human heart. So run the records of all time, as far back as we can go into the dim past. Nor is it a mere fancy that has thus prompted man to greet the coming of spring with festival, as symbolizing the victory of the soul over death; there is only living and living again.

Think how you will of that tragic and lovely Figure, this is the day of Jesus, and all men must feel, if only for a brief time, the impress of his spirit as they read the story of his pilgrimage, whose divine tenderness seems to blend naturally with the Spirit of the Spring when the finger of God is pointing the new birth of the

world. Our little passions are as naught in face of that mighty Passion; our small trials fade before that solemn trial of Love and Death; and we are subdued and thrilled with a sense of something as far beyond our useful tasks or transient joys as the awakening of Nature is beyond our waking from the slumbers of night. Indeed the life of Jesus and the gentle might of his spirit seem like a higher order of nature, an unveiling of forces that will yet change the winter of humanity into summer life and loveliness.

> On move the resurrection hours,
> The Easter heralds throng—
> Till sudden bursts the miracle
> Of blossom and of song.

No other day so stirs the spirit of hope and courage in the soul of man, evoking in us a hope that leaps beyond the borders of the world and the courage that faces Eternity. For this, Easter, in its history, its music, its springing earth, its prophecy of renewal, stands; for the putting off of the tyranny of sense and the terror of the grave, and the putting on of immortality. It gives us the key to the higher heroism of humanity, its grand optimism, its divine idealism: that which Tennyson meant when he wrote that rather than the glory of warrior, the glory of orator, the glory of song, "give me the glory of going on and still to be"; a glory which puts a new meaning and value into life with its efforts so sadly baffled, its achievements so imperfect, its acquirements so unsatisfactory. For we can work with brave hearts,

and endure with serenity, if the good we aim at here and never quite attain is an earnest of the good we shall win and realize otherwheres.

As we do not ask logic to prove the coming of spring, so there is no need that any one argue in behalf of the faith—older than history and deeper than logic—that the mysterious Power which weaves in silence garments of beauty for the lily will the much more delight to quicken our spirits and clothe us with moral beauty that shall never fade. The mere discussion of the existence of God gave Heine a strange disquietude, an uneasy dread, such as he once felt when visiting an asylum, and, becoming separated from his guide, found himself surrounded by madmen. He had made the discovery that God is immanent, and that was the element of sanity in his life. So it is with the faith of this day; it is in accord with the sanities of life, as deep as the home and the family, as deep as infancy and old age, as deep as love and death. On Easter day we have to do with a Fact in the past which is also a living Force in the present, and to describe that abiding reality is the duty of this hour.

§ 1

If one would realize the magnitude of the Easter fact and the wonder and bloom which it brought to the wintry faith of man, let him go back and read the musings of the men who lived on the other side of that empty tomb in the garden. Who does not feel the poignant pathos of the old Greek anthology, with its wistful,

yearning hope, its longing for those fallen asleep, its undertone of sadness amid the vanishings of time—like autumn winds blowing through flowers of spring? There was faith in a future life, but it was a dim, flickering taper buffeted by chill winds; a hope not hopeless, but unhopeful; always the twilight, never the glad, confident dawn. To Homer the life after death was only a shadow of the life on earth, and those who entered it were exiles from lovely Greece, with its soft skies and violet seas. To the Hebrew seers Sheol was a place of darkness, of gloom, of echoless silence, where mortals became dust. In my study is a tiny book of verse written in China three thousand year ago, breathing the same human tenderness that we feel to-day, the same fondness for friends, the same joy of life; but it is haunted by the piercing regret that all things end in the grave.

Plato, the angelic thinker, walked in the porch of the Academy and reasoned of the future of the soul; and it is open to debate whether logic has advanced an inch beyond his great argument. But when Cicero and his friends read that argument one of them remarked: "When I read I assent; but as soon as I lay down the book all the assent is gone." Plato held, as did Socrates before him, that the best that man can do is to make a raft out of such materials as reason furnishes, and at the end of life drift out into the dark in the faith that "no harm can come to a good man in this life or after death." They were right in thinking that without a belief in a future life the mortal career has little meaning, but that very insight made the future all the more

dark. Hence the yearning pensiveness of the best minds of the classic world which Browning has portrayed in Cleon, as of a long winter with no hope of spring.

Yet when we stand, a few years later, on this side of the first Easter, how different it is! Everywhere there are signs of spring, a strange new hope welling up in the hearts of men, opening buds of joy and sunburst song. This is no mere fancy, but a plain fact of history, which even Gibbons records not without wonder. The emblems on the Christian graves in the catacombs bear witness to a new spirit of courage and hope with which the sleepers met death. By some fresh breath the gloom seems all swept away and a sweet and placid light to fill its place "like an enclosure of starlight from the skies." There the evergreen leaf bespeaks a summer in the soul which the frost of death cannot touch; and the Good Shepherd shows that the mortal way, so terrible of old, has become a meadow path beside still waters. Those graves hold the dust of no favored race. They were the last refuge of an humble and despised folk, many of whom died amid the fiendish shouts of the amphitheater, torn to pieces by wild beasts. Yet they bear no marks of anger or despair, but always the symbols of gentleness and hope, which attest the power of some new faith to still the voice of passion and the sob of grief.

> They listen'd; for unto their ear,
> The word which they had long'd to hear,
> Had come at last—the lifeful word, —
> Which they had often almost heard.

No wonder Rome was amazed by the advent of her decaying cities of a people whom torture could not affright nor death dismay. Amid pestilence they came forth into the streets, not to seek revenge, but to cool the fevers of death and to minister to those who had persecuted and spitefully used them. They had a cheerfulness and hope, a power and patience, a fearless and glad enthusiasm new among men. Something had happened since Plato reasoned in Athens and the classic poets mused so pensively of the evanescence of beauty and the vanity of human hopes. Some new fact had entered the world, lighting up the dark confusion of time, making men free from the tyranny of the grave and joyously assured of a life beyond. Here were men and women who greeted an earthquake with a hymn and escorted a martyr to his end with shouts of victory, as if they heard

> The still Voice bid this mortal
> Put on immortality.

## § 2

Such was the change wrought in the spiritual climate of the world by the Easter Fact, and only a fact could have done it. Those who hold that a fiction or a dream or a love-woven delusion could have thus divided the story of man into before and after, accept a thing more incredible than the fact itself. No; the followers of Jesus had seen their Master die in cruel tortures on the Cross, conquered by the hate of his foes, and no one who saw

that ghastly scene could have any illusions about it. When malice had done its worst and hope was gone, all at once they found him who had hung on the accursed tree by their side again, alive! That was all they knew; that convinced them that death is nothing to the soul; and he became the center of their faith and the burden of their message to the ends of the earth. At midday on the open road Saul of Tarsus was won from hate to love, from persecution to profession, by the power of the Living Christ, and his heroic evangel was an added witness.

What was the Easter fact which turned sorrow into song, and changed a band of dejected disciples into heralds of a new, victorious hope? Surely the life of Jesus, and still more his death and resurrection, is the supreme demonstration, to which there is no parallel, of the power of spirit; of that for which science has no term, and the secret of which it cannot know. Here is a fact, a force, an influence in perfect harmony with physical forces, but it is not of them, and only faintly do they symbolize it. True, we have tokens of the power of spirit everywhere, but the profound and special meaning of the life of Jesus is its revelation of spiritual power acting directly, not only upon inanimate matter, but upon man himself, effecting vital changes in his faith, his thought, his character, and even in his physical life. In the history of that life it is seen restoring discordant minds to harmony, withered bodies to soundness, the sick to health, the blind to sight, and the recently dead to life.

Once we see that Jesus was the greatest, the most original, the most creative, the most dynamic of spiritual personalities, the facts recorded of him are not only intelligible but luminous. What men call miracles are but the graceful gestures of such a Being, bearing witness to the divinity of Spirit as the creator, repairer, and master of matter. In such a history the story of the resurrection may seem wonderful—as indeed it is—but, none the less, as natural as the blooming of a flower or the shining of a star, since even outside that history we can set no limit to the power of Spirit. Jesus did not create faith in immortality; the path of early history is marked by the monuments of forgotten peoples, who left nothing but proofs of their faith in a future life. But Jesus did bring both life and immortality to light. What was before a guess, or at best a hope, he revealed to be a fact by the power of Spirit, a power that gives immortality its true character and shows it to be an ever more abundant life. Once for all, victoriously, by the power of an endless life, he revealed

> That life is ever lord of death,
> And love can never lose its own.

## § 3

With the deepest faith of our race, revealed in the life and attested in the resurrection of Jesus, the highest philosophy agrees, the while both are confirmed by the songs of poets and the visions of seers. In one of the profoundest theses of recent centuries we read: "Outside

of spirit there is not, and cannot be, any reality, and, the more anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real." So Bradley wrote in *Appearance and Reality,* one of the few books of our time which will be read a hundred years hence; showing that spirit is the primal, creative, abiding reality—all the shapes and shows of life, its myriad manifestations, its veiled outshinings. To-day it is not so easy to "vanquish Berkeley with a grin," and while we can see that matter is of use to spirit, it is not clear that spirit is of any use to matter, save as its cruder stuff may serve an exquisite artistry. Indeed, in our day matter dissolves into energy, leaving the old materialism a castle in the air, without material upon which to stand. Not only is its foundation gone, but relativity has taken away its framework, and the end of the inquiry is not yet in sight.

Unless all tokens fail, we are on the eve of a new and profounder interpretation of the universe and of the life of man. Bergson finds the deepest reality in a Life-Force, forever pushing up in conquest over matter toward the freedom of the spirit; like a cavalry charge, "able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death." The advocates of Emergent Evolution refuse any longer to regard new and higher qualities and kinds of being as merely mechanical results of lower types. They discover a direction, a nisus, a "striving," as Alexander calls it, toward ever finer forms and qualities. Inevitably the inquiry must be pushed further, and when it is, men will find that the Reality back of all things, in all things,

over all things, is Infinite Spirit. No matter by what name we call it—mysticism, faith, vision, love—whatever it be that shows us the deeper meaning of the world and the life of man, and makes the difference between the surface-light of sagacity and the interpenetrating glow of insight, we owe to it the clearest guidance in these short days of sun and frost.

Slowly—so slowly—we grope our way toward the truth of a Spiritual Order in which all the higher values of life have their source, sanction, and security. To the reality of that realm all the noblest life of humanity bears witness, and from it the purest souls of the race have drawn inward sustaining. Of that Order "the Lord of all Good Life" was and is a citizen; its laws were revealed in his life; its power became incandescent in his personality. By the power of spirit he was master of disease, discord, and dark fatality—nay more, of Life and Time and Death: in its fellowship he still lives and serves humanity, a thousand times more alive than in the days of his flesh. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, that would have been a miracle—or what men call such—since in the true order of reality Spirit is sovereign and supreme. By the power of spirit his swift and gentle years moved with the lilt and lift of a lyric, and even the tragedy of his death became the epic of the life everlasting. "Behold, I am alive for evermore."

§ 4

Because the Easter Fact is of this nature, it is not merely a record in history or a date in the calendar, but

a reality which may be realized in experience to-day as truly as in the long ago. That is to say, what we have is not simply a fact in the far past, but a living, revealing, redeeming force in the present—Christ's forming within us a continuing glory both of character and of hope—raising us from tombs of selfishness, worldliness, and despair, until the eternal life begins to be an impalpable murmur in our hearts, as when inland the pilgrim hears the murmur of the sea. A Kempis tells of a man who was deeply perplexed about his own future destiny, and who called out as he lay prostrate before the altar, "O, that I certainly knew!" Then he heard the Divine voice speaking within him, saying, "What wouldst thou do if this certain knowledge were bestowed on thee? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and rest secure in thy perseverance." Even so, lifted up and established by this answer, his perplexity disappeared, and he applied himself to know the will of God and to do it.

Until we live the life of the Spirit, our doubts, of whatever kind, are invalid and open to doubt. It is by following in the way of Christ—his divinity unfolding in our humanity—that we best set forth, in the atmosphere of our thought and action, a quality of life befitting immortal souls. Those who walk in his way attain to serenity and assurance of spirit, and that divine carelessness with respect to death which excludes its horrors and reveals only its sanctity. Not only St. Paul but a mighty company testify that life in Christ—in his spirit, in his service—discloses its own eternal and revealing quality. They, and such as they, are not left, as we are,

to build a frail hope out of the fragments of three score years and ten. They are lifted up to where the star of their inborn destiny lies below their feet, mastered and outsped. "When shall we become that which we are!" cried Maeterlinck. We, who are sons of the Highest, live amid misgivings and fears, whereas it is permitted us, if we seek the things which are above, to know that death is nothing to the soul.

May it be given us, on this resurrection day, to see through the shadows into the life of things, that when the echoes of our songs have died away, and the bells have fallen into dust, there shall live in us a new life of victorious hope; so that when flesh and heart fail we shall know whither our path leads—even to him who is our true life, in whom we shall renew our fellowship with those gone before us into the unveiled Presence.

Have faith in the third day morning
In the resurrection hour,
For truth that is sown in weakness
Shall be raised again in power.

## HE ASCENDED

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven?
*Acts* 1: 10.

THE Book of Acts describes the outward, expanding movement of the religion of Jesus from the empty tomb to the ends of the earth. Joining the evangelistic tradition with the apostolic ministry, it follows "the extension of the Gospel-Book," in concentric circles, as far as Rome. If the Gospels were the musical score written by the Master, the Book of the Missionaries shows how that redeeming melody was played out, not without difficulty and discord, by his followers. Its pages are not gathered around one person, as is the case in the four Gospels, but around a great idea—the power of the spirit of Jesus in history. That is to say, its purpose is to portray how that spirit worked itself out in deeds of healing, in personal moral recoveries, in finer forms of social order, in the development of new institutions, and in the grand missionary enterprise.

For that reason, the Book of Acts makes record of what has been called "three significant transfers" of interest, emphasis, and attachment, as the things which Jesus "began both to do and teach" were carried forward by his followers. First, the transfer of interest from the visible to the invisible Christ. Beyond a certain

point a masterful personality does not educate; it dominates. It was expedient that the physical presence of Jesus be withdrawn, that his spiritual influence might be the more potent in his friends. Second, the transfer of experience from a local to a universal Christ. If Jesus had continued to haunt his disciples as he did during those wonderful forty days, appearing now in a closed room, now by the lake at dawn, they would have lingered in those places where the vision dwelt and the sweet voice was heard. Third, the transfer of loyalty from a loosely organized group of friends to a corporate body of believers, a beloved community which the Apostle Paul called "the Body of Christ." Had it not been so, Christianity would have become little more than a lovely legend, not a power moving like a Gulf Stream in the history of the race.

Such is the meaning of the Ascension of Jesus; and if we would think of it aright we must rid our minds, as far as possible, of all ideas of time and space. By the necessity of our nature, it would seem—living an earth-bound life in a world of three dimensions—we link whatever is strong, noble, and true with what is above, and whatever is weak, base, and vile with what is below. No matter what science may tell us of how the world is made, the two dimensions of space will always describe the two orders of being. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise; and until the end of things man will look to the heights for the sovereign virtues and to the depths for the malefic vices. Nor does it matter what words we use so long as we keep in mind that such ways of thinking are

only symbols which conceal as much as they reveal of the truth which they try to tell. Make trial of it yourself, and you will find it impossible to state in a better way the supremacy of Jesus, set forth in words so spacious in their poetical beauty. None the less, such words are only colored vapors of lovely and fitful shape, trying to make real a truth with which time and space have nothing to do.

The peaks of God are not physical altitudes; they are moral heights. When St. Paul tells us that Christ ascended far above all heavens, he is not thinking in terms of distance, but of his transcendent supremacy of character. It does not mean that he is remote, but that he is regnant, by virtue of his ineffable goodness, and that his throne is in a realm where a thousand years are as a day. In this, as in other truth, the letter kills; the spirit alone gives life. Over the realm in which Jesus reigns in the hearts of men time and space have no control, and no physical barrier can separate us from him and those who share his estate. This implies the startling nearness of God and the presence of eternity in time. It unveils a higher, finer order of being which is interwoven with the rough ways of the world in which we live and toil, as the ether of space interpenetrates all things, a world of light and power and beauty underlying and over-arching the tragic, aspiring life of humanity. There is no up or down, no far and near, in the spiritual world; no darkness and no distance. If we have the mind of Christ we are with him forthwith, and drifting seas or piled up ages do not divide us from him.

So interpreted, the ascension of Jesus was the enthronement of a spirit and quality of character never before exalted—a coronation of the Beatitudes. Sir John Seeley tells us in *Ecco Homo*—one of the first efforts toward a new understanding of Jesus, and still worthy of study—that the virtues which Jesus made supreme in his life were not regarded as virtues at all in the Roman world. They were despised as defects. Humility, forgiveness, mercy, meekness, purity, pity, peace-making, so far from being admirable and praiseworthy, were held to be weaknesses, as they were by Nietzsche in our own generation, who denounced the ethics of Jesus as a "slave-morality" which, if it has its way, will ruin the race. Yet these were the virtues glorified by Jesus, alike in his life and in his teaching. Such was the transvaluation of values which he achieved, not only reversing the moral judgment of the race, but erecting a new set of values, in which the wisdom hidden from the wise is revealed to babes, and the weak things of the world confound the mighty. Never in the whole spiritual history of man has there been such a revolution as he wrought, and even to-day we see its meaning but dimly—hardly daring to utter it, much less follow it.

Indeed we are actually afraid of "that strange power which men call weakness," lest it undo us, whereas it was the incredible might by which Jesus won his victory. "It is so simple, yet so fearful," as Herman Suderman said in a shining line which runs like a refrain through his play *John the Baptist*—a Christ-drama of amazing beauty and haunting power, showing how the

stern Prophet of the Desert was subdued by a mystery he could neither define nor resist. No wonder the life of Jesus gave a new date to time and a new dimension to religion, the meaning and measure of which we have not yet guessed. Nor is it strange that his personality, at once so challenging and so consecrating, acts upon men, when they yield to its spell, like a new, genetic element, remaking them so utterly, as it did Francis of Assisi, that we almost need a new kind of psychology to explain it. Aye, there are depths we have not fathomed, and heights we have not yet imagined, in the revelation of Christ.

Thus, by the ascension of Christ is meant the lifting up of his truth, his spirit, his character, and, most of all, his personality, into a world of permanence, where he can be seen by faith and known by experience. It meant the exaltation of a local and visible Figure into a universal and invisible Presence, capable of being realized anywhere, everything; by Mozoomda in India or by Phillips Brooks in Boston. It meant that he left the stony paths of Judea to become the Captain of a higher humanity, leading our race out of shadow into the light. So understood, the ascending of Christ is not simply a fact in history, but a living and abiding reality. In short, the reality of Christ, like the meaning of it, has a center, but no circumference, no limit. Never once did Francis or Wesley pause to debate the immeasurable supremacy of Christ. They knew whom they followed, and their lives were a perpetual disclosure of truth in his fellowship.

Hear now a word from Matthew Arnold: "Socrates inspired boundless friendship and esteem, but a penetrating enthusiasm of love does not belong to Socrates. With Jesus it is different." Yes, with Jesus it is always different, and the longer we ponder the fact the more sundering the difference is seen to be. It is world-wide and heaven-high. No other of the great masters and interpreters of humanity has ever had anything resembling the permanent influence, the persistent power over mankind, that belongs to Jesus. It has worked wonders, often by itself alone. In times when faith ran low and a mist lay on the mind of the age, the power of the living Christ has wrought a resurrection of righteousness. The marvel of that time-defeating Presence, the power that can bridge the ages and live new-born and radiant in new and changed times, is past all understanding. No other life has ever become a theology; no other personality has been a revelation, in the same degree, of what God is, what the ideal life of man is, and what the meaning of the world is.

There is no need to belittle any of the mighty way-showers of humanity in order to exalt Jesus. Socrates was a great and noble man, heroic withal and wise, and no one can read the story of his death and not be touched by its dignity and pathos. Plato was lofty and pure; Plutarch was a saint of the Most High. But men built pyramids on the flat sands of Egypt where alone their greatness is impressive. Amid the Alps a pyramid would be a tiny thing, so utterly would the mountains of God dwarf the masonry of man. Just so Jesus towers above

the loftiest of the sons of man, as the Alps out-top the Sphinx; and he lives in the heart of humanity as no one else may ever hope to do. The great and good men of every age have ministered, by their inspiration and example, to the salvation of man from evil and error. But Jesus stands high above them all, equally for the overflowing fullness of his spiritual being and the depth, sweetness, and sanity of his truth.

Take the life of Prince Buddha, who has been called the Light of Asia. He was exalted. He was gracious. He was pure. Pity was the spirit of his life. None the less, he was the victim of a profound and awful error, which even his all-embracing pity does not disguise. He held that life is desire, that desire is egoism, that egoism is misery, and that the highest hope of man is the hope of extinction. The moral discipline which became the path to peace and nothingness was noble, but it ended in a benumbing quietism—a paralysis of pessimism. With Jesus it was different, as different as sunburst joy from gray despair. Jesus saw that life is desire, that desire is ordained of God to become love, and that love is the power of life here and prophetic of life hereafter. Measure, if you can, the measureless distance between these two ideals! One trudges along a weary way in a universe which makes death the ultimate beatitude; the other unveils the glow and color of life, its radiance and reason for being, and lights up the world like a dawn. Yes, with Jesus it is always different; always it is a deeper insight, a higher hope, and a more challenging demand.

Somehow, by virtue of a fine instinct by which we

know that character is the most significant wisdom and goodness the only real cleverness, men feel that there was that in Jesus above and apart from what we mean by the term "intellect." Yet, since the world pays tribute to intellect, it ought to realize the supremacy, the amazing reach and range and grandeur of the mind of Jesus. Set alongside Plato, Shakspere, or Kant, we are aware of another order of mind in Jesus—like the difference between *Hamlet* and the parables by the sea. As Pascal said: "Jesus does not come in the glory of the scientific or intellectual order any more than he comes in the order of kingly or military glory; he comes in his own order of holiness." Yet when we recall the holiest minds we know—like St. Francis—they seem but a dim reflection of Jesus, following a splendor ever on before. What the Apostle Paul called "the Mind of Christ" is the testing-place of the highest truth, as it is the trysting-place of souls who seek to know the way and will and love of God.

Why is it that the life of Jesus stirs us so strangely, and that his words—so wonderful in their beauty and surprise—unlock doors in us accessible to no other speech, almost as if he were speaking them to us for the first time on the hillside of Galilee? The answer is not far to seek. Unless there is something eternally human in God and something eternally divine in man, religion is a romance, our faith a fiction, our philosophy a foolishness. If this be not so, revelation is impossible, and prayer the vainest of all vain things. Here lies the fundamental basis of all goodness and all truth. Because there is something in God akin to us, and something in us akin

to God, religion is the one master reality in the life of man. Of that reality Jesus is the supreme revelation, and it is therefore that he haunts us, even while he dwells in us, because what is highest in us is one with himself.

And that is why, when we live our lives for the ends which he taught us to seek and serve, we seem to be living the Gospel story over again, every crisis familiar, every temptation understood, every scene vivid. So, in this far-off age, we seem to be living with him in that radiant past, just because he is living with us in this tangled present. And that is why, when we talk about Jesus one to another, our hearts burn within us by the way, and we seem to be talking with him. The world is different, life is dearer, deeper, and more wonderful, as the mystery gathers and grows. It was so in the beginning. Man came to know the uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus, not as a proposition of theology, but because of the effect that he produced upon them. As they lived with him they found that power came into their lives; evil habits that had been irresistible, disappeared; the sense of aloofness from God vanished; death seemed less terrible and final. When he went away and they looked back at the days spent in his company, his figure seemed every day vaster and more august. His words were the same, but their meaning grew until they shone like stars. His acts remained the same, but they were charged with a new potency and prophecy. His death was the same dark, inscrutable mystery of love crucified by hate; but it detached itself from its place in time and became something eternal—revealing an altar-throne

and a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—an eternal sorrow, a red law of sacrifice, for the moment made visible. From that day to this those who have walked in his way, obedient to his truth, have been aware of the fellowship of One whom they knew to be the Eternal Christ.

Of such an experience, too deep for words to trace, the story of the Ascension is an apocalypse and interpretation. Time and distance vanish, and we are beside those disciples as they stand gazing into heaven as Jesus is taken up and his figure fades. Into mystery and cloud in which his going gives the truest light, he ascends. Yet, somehow, we too know that he goes away from us only to come nearer to us, nearer than the leaves of spring and "closer than the breath we breathe." He has not left us, but lives to lead us, lifting art out of the mire, making literature luminous with spiritual meanings it never knew before, and slowly exalting the life of man from the animal to the angel shape. About him cluster the altruisms of history, the highest hopes and loftiest faiths of humanity. He is the eternal contemporary of mankind, the noblest incentive to pure thinking, right living, and heroic service that we know.

An age of luxury may reject His discipline, but times make it clear that they were wrong. An age of materialism may reject His idealism, but their children will come seeking it again. An age of puritanism may condemn His gaiety and gentleness, but the pendulum will swing back again. An age of scientific knowledge may spurn His simplicity, but men come back with outstretched arms and empty hearts to ask the real question

that learning leaves unanswered for the soul. Culture cannot take the place of Christ; it belongs to the study, and not to the street. In a world of wild uncertainties, new discoveries, and new theories the Character of Christ still stands and judges humanity, not a Figure swimming obscurely in the mist of tradition, but the one triumphant hope that the earth will be drawn back from the red horror of war into the orbit of peace.

Wherefore stand we gazing into heaven! Of a truth he ascended far above the skies, but only that he might fill all things with his light and power and beauty. Our task is here, and the hour has struck when we must translate our vision into heroic character, into social justice, national righteousness and world comity, setting our faces steadfastly toward the day when every man shall hear the Gospel in the tongue in which he was born. Like the men which were of old, we need to betake ourselves to the Upper Room, that so we may realize the unity of the church and be endued with power to show forth, in this time of tumult and confusion, the power of the Spirit of Jesus in history.

## AFTER—

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

*Luke* 24: 30, 31.

EVERY great scene in the story of Jesus finds, sooner or later, its great artist. If Raphael took the Transfiguration for his own, and Van Dyck the Descent from the Cross, Rembrandt, selected the Supper at Emmaus. No doubt most of us have seen his painting in the Louvre, so often copied. It is his greatest work, but those who have studied the story of the picture know that its perfect idealization of the scene was not reached all at once. If we may judge by his etchings, he was not clear as to how the revelation of the Hidden Stranger was to be made.

One of the early sketches shows the place of Jesus at the head of the table empty, except for a radiancy of glory with an embedded cross. But this seems rightly to have been laid aside. It was not near enough to the story, which tells us that the vanished Figure was known to them by the breaking of bread. They had seen those hands doing that very thing over and over again. It was the same touch, the same action, the same raising of the eyes to heaven, the same moving fingers. A closer glance

revealed mysterious marks in the hands of benediction on the bread—a Loaf broken by a Broken Hand. No higher effulgence was needed, no further cruciform delineations. The two friends are a study: one has his face turned away from us, but his hands are clasped. The other, the elder of the two, has the light in his eyes. The servant approaching the table stands like a statue—in adoration. The light and shade with which the master artist made magic are both of them saying, "It is the Lord!"

By the same token, it is in the atmosphere of that sacramental eventide that we ought to study the questions that rise out of the Easter anthem. If Easter assures us of life beyond death, by that very fact it awakens the natural eager inquiry of humanity as to how we live, under what conditions, and where. Such questions are in all our hearts as we think of our own passing, and still more when we try to follow in faith and imagination the flight of those who vanish from us. In "imagination," I say, because so many mistake their inability to conceive any conditions of a life after death for a lack of faith in it. For all of us the old scenery of faith—a shining city, with gates of pearl and streets of gold—has faded; and most of us have nothing to take its place. The beyond is a bare, blank void. Therefore, it will help us to study the subject in the lucid air of Easter day, radiant with divine hauntings, aglow with wonder and joy, when Jesus revealed himself to his friends, and was known by his voice, his gesture, and the wound-prints of his agony, as well as by the impress of his personality.

It will mean much if such a study confirms our faith, even if it does not satisfy all our desire.

The last words of Mark Twain were, "If we meet—" but silence hushed his voice. The final entry in the Journal of Sir Walter Scott is as follows: "We slept reasonably, but on the next morning—"; the sentence was never finished. Death cut it short. Only Sir Walter knew what came to him on the next morning. There is a famous story of an officer in the British army in India, who, in discussing these matters with his friends, remarked that some day he expected to know in five minutes more than all the philosophers had ever learned. When asked what he meant, he said: "The first five minutes after death." What does the soul discover in that moment of awakening and emancipation in a life different from the physical conditions which beset us here? Jesus, in his teaching, did not answer the question directly, though he did something much better and wiser. If he taught the triumph of personality, he left the details in a discreet silence, lest they interfere with the life that now is.

Such efforts as have been made to imagine the conditions of a life after death—not another life, but life further on—are unsatisfactory, when they are not grotesque and irritating. They are for the most part projections into the future of desires unfulfilled on earth, finding there what is lacking here. The *Paradiso* of Dante is well-nigh as unattractive as the heaven of Milton, with its shock of armies and tramping legions. Sir Conan Doyle and his fellow-seekers may have helped to humanize the after-life in the thought of many, but the picture

is spoiled when they try to fill out the details. The vision of Swedenborg is nobler by far, albeit leaving much to be desired—but it is more satisfying than all other such portrayals, alike in moral insight and spiritual reality. Since all efforts to picture the future in detail are futile, must we put the whole matter aside by saying that the sum of wisdom lies in the assurance that the God who made us and brought us to what we are will lead us to what we ought to be?

Put otherwise, must we admit that we know nothing at all about the life after death, and are doomed to live in a world of dim hints and cryptic analogies, with no glad assurance? Far, very far from it! Indeed, my whole point is to show that we know much—very much—about life after death, both as to its reality and its conditions; all, in fact, that we need to know, and if we are wise enough to lay the facts to heart, we shall find consolation for to-day and inspiration for the morrow. Let me be specific, in the effort to help both our thinking and our living. What we have to remember is that *all the realities that make life great, deep, and rewarding, giving it meaning here and value hereafter, abide untouched by time or death.* They are at once realities and prophecies which, if we consider them deeply, are like luminous streamers thrown forward by an enormous search-light; and if they do not show us all that we desire to know, they do illumine the future, the while they bless and guide us here.

Take thought, and consider. God lives here, hereafter, and unto everlasting, and in Him there is no death, no

darkness, no distance; pray, what more do we really want or need to know? Without God a life after death would be the ultimate horror of desolation, not a destiny but a disaster. With God over all, in all, through all, the life beyond is a lengthening vista of hope and joy. "In Him we live and move and have our being," said the Apostle; and that will be as true after death as it is here, and as blessed. "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations, from everlasting to everlasting," sang the Psalmist; which always evokes for me the picture of an old homestead where a family has lived for centuries—mellow with time, rich in memories. Though our days be as grass, as a tale that is told, as a mist that melts, God lives, and he is the home of the soul here and forever more.

Nay, more; if in the Old Testament we learn that man lives in God, in the Gospel we discover that God lives in Man! Jesus lifted everything into the light, showing us that life is one here and hereafter, and that the Eternal Life is not a dim state into which we enter at death, but a present reality, at once a possession and a prophecy. His religion is nothing else or less than the eternal life lived in time, in the spirit of love by the grace of God. Emerson was right when he refused to discuss mere survival, saying that Jesus, who lived in the realm of moral realities, heedless of sensual fortunes, uttered no word about the duration of the soul. Alas, it was left for his disciples to sever duration from the moral attributes and teach immortality as a doctrine, to be maintained by evidences. Only in a spiritual uni-

verse is faith in a future life pertinent, and in such a universe life is measured not by quantity but by quality. In the vision of Jesus life is all of a piece, here and hereafter; life beyond beginning just where it leaves off here, as in the spiritual drama of the rich man and Lazarus.

Once we realize the unity of life as Jesus taught it, much is made plain. The effect of physical death upon the soul may be incalculable, but no spiritual law is clouded by it, much less abrogated. The awakening after the ordeal of death may be bewildering, but the moral continuity of life is unbroken. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"—that is, in a garden—said Jesus to the man who died with him. To-day, before the sun goes down—there, as here, we shall know each other, the moral law rules, and salvation is in the fellowship of love and righteousness. The life of purity, the quest of truth, the doing of good—all the laws of the life of the spirit reach beyond death, and abide. Whatever else may fade, love remains, and love never faileth, for God is love. There, as here, truth is the trophy of valor and obedience, and the vision of God is the beatitude of the pure in heart. Truth, Beauty, Goodness, abide; to be fellow-workers with God in His moral enterprise, in the fellowship of His helpers—what more do we ask to know of life after death?

Let us add now the fact of a universal moral order, sovereign everywhere, and it begins to be clear that we know a great deal about the life beyond. It moves under the same moral jurisdiction, in obedience to the same

law of righteousness and retribution. Neither in life nor in death can we escape the moral law. Its empire is universal. If we take the wings of the morning and fly to the ends of the earth, lo! it is there. If we sink into the lowest depth, it is there. There is no redemption, here or anywhere, until we learn to do justly, to love mercy, and to live humbly with God. The idea that physical death is moral doom—fixing our fate, either for salvation or damnation—is a moral absurdity. To limit moral progress to the life on earth is to stereotype the race in eternal imperfection. Death does not make a man a saint. Nor does it petrify him in sin. It does not touch the moral life, so far as we can see, save as it may set us free from handicaps which beset us here.

To put it plainly, if there be no process of purification after death no mortal will be saved. Only the good is eternal, only the true is everlasting. No one of us may ever hope to attain the final goal of union with God while he is as imperfect as the best man knows himself to be. In the purest soul, apart from the flesh, there is much that is unworthy, and must be cleansed away, as Newman makes us feel in *The Dream of Gerontius*. Sin is hell, here and hereafter. If sin is eternal, hell is eternal; but the idea of eternal sin is unthinkable where God lives and loves. It is permitted us to hope that God will not tarry nor tire until every wandering soul is redeemed. No one need be dogmatic. No one need set a date. But some of us hold, with the great and simple Lincoln, that in the long last it will be "all or none."

If now we read these moral and spiritual facts in the

light of Easter day, with its glowing heart of fellowship, and its gentle, awful unveilings, they shine like stars. In the whole history of human experience there is nothing like the resurrection of Jesus. Other records tell of resuscitations; but that One has stood among men, and talked with them, who has death behind him, never to face it again, is the crowning wonder. In all the scenes surrounding this fact there is a blend of remoteness and intimacy, of dignity and simplicity. Tenderness and reproof are mingled in his words, as if to chide his friends for their slowness of heart, as he had done before. Now to one, now to two, now to groups of many or few, he revealed himself in an air of ineffable spirituality, and with a gentleness worthy of his spirit. There is no hint of the uncanny, no trace of the unnatural, but a sense of reality made the more impressive by an exquisite reserve, which sought to confirm faith without satisfying mere curiosity. It is not only profoundly satisfying, but luminously revealing of what we really need to know.

Of course, a skeptic may say that if Jesus possessed his own body after death, he did not vanish; and if he vanished, he did not possess it. But that is the closed, dogmatic mind, glibly deciding the issue in advance. The purpose of the disclosure was to reconcile the two points of such a dilemma, and set us free, once for all, equally from a one-sided materialism and a vague spiritism. Here we are shown that nothing is lost in the passage through death, and yet the limitations of the present order are left behind. The crucified body and the spiritual body are so closely akin that even the wound-prints

are visible, but the glorified body is not trammeled as the physical body was. At the moment when he offers tests of the reality of his presence, he shows that he is not held by the laws of matter. Within a room when the doors are shut, by the lake-side at dawn, he made himself known as a spiritual presence, a complete personality, an abiding friend.

Such an unveiling is adequate and satisfying, both as regards the triumph of personality and its destiny. All that is pure and true and lovely must be immortal in God, and, because He has made us capable of such qualities, we too must be immortal in Him. By as much as we gain these qualities, by so much do we realize the eternal life in time, and are set free from the shadows that haunt our way. Here, too, we have assurance that the life beyond is no pale image and shadow of the life that now is, but a kindly, home-like fellowship, where we hear voices now hushed by the dullness of our ears, and live in a profounder intimacy with those whom we have loved and lost awhile.

Slowly, inevitably, soon or late, this mortal—all that makes us hateful to ourselves and others—shall be redeemed by the law of Heavenly Death—the death, that is, of all that is unheavenly within us—yielding to the life of God in us, overflowing, abundant, triumphant; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written in the Bible, the nature of the soul, and in the creative and redeeming will of God: *Death is swallowed up in victory.*

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